



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

**Testimony of the NYC Department of Education
on Class Size Reduction
Before the NYC Council Committees on Education**

February 28, 2020

Testimony of Karin Goldmark, Deputy Chancellor, Division of School Planning and
Development

Good morning Chair Treyger and each of the Members of the Education Committee here today. My name is Karin Goldmark and I am the Deputy Chancellor for the Division of School Planning and Development at the New York City Department of Education (DOE). I am also a proud public school graduate and parent.

Lorraine Grillo, President and CEO of the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), is joining me today. We are pleased to be here to discuss class size in New York City schools and our work to ensure that all of our students have access to an equitable and high-quality education.

Under this administration, we've cumulatively made \$5 billion in new education investments to support our schools and improve student outcomes. This includes over \$1 billion targeted directly to school budgets through Fair Student Funding (FSF). We are particularly grateful for the Council's leadership here, including the funding added in the 2019 budget that raised the floor for FSF, bringing all schools closer to the funding levels they need and deserve.

The Equity and Excellence for All agenda is making a difference in our student's lives. They are starting school earlier with access to free, full day, high-quality education for three-year-olds and four-year-olds, through 3-K for All and Pre-K for All. We are strengthening students' foundational skills with Universal Literacy and Algebra for All. We are providing more support to our students along the way, with College Access for All. We are meeting the needs of the whole child through Community Schools and social and emotional learning and restorative justice practices in all schools. We know it's working: our graduation and college readiness rates rise to record levels, as our students go on to bright futures as New York City public school graduates.

At the same time, we have made historic investments in our school facilities. The \$18.8 billion 2020–2024 Capital Plan dedicates \$8.9 billion for capacity projects, including funding for 57,489 new seats over the next five years, meeting the administration's commitment to adding 83,000 new seats citywide.

The Council has been a true partner in this work, and we are grateful to Speaker Johnson, Chair Treyger, and Council for their leadership, support, and advocacy, and look forward to our continued partnership.



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

The DOE has a longstanding commitment to class size reduction as one of many factors that contribute to high-quality education. There is strong research that supports the correlation between small class size and improved student outcomes. We know from our annual School Survey that class size is a concern for our teachers and families. Concurrently, there is ample evidence that high quality early childhood education has powerful positive effects on learning and life outcomes for students. There is also new evidence that our community schools approach has improved graduation rates and test scores, as well as reducing chronic absenteeism and disciplinary incidents.

It is important to note that class size reduction is a complex and multifaceted issue. Class size is a function not only of the classrooms available, but also our ability to recruit and retain teaching staff, including teachers in hard-to-staff areas, as well as school configuration, student assignment, and building schedules. It is also an issue of funding resources. It is important to note that the current budget outlook at the state and local levels are very concerning.

The foundational Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) decision identified several specific ways in which New York State's funding shortfalls deprived students of their constitutionally protected right to a sound basic education. These areas included teacher quality, physical infrastructure, and basic instruments of learning. The case specifically addressed class size as one of several approaches that render educational benefits to children. It is important to note that the State did fund the capital portions of the CFE decision; the operating portions of the decision were never fully funded.

Following that landmark CFE decision, New York City was required to develop a plan that included a class size reduction plan that was to be achieved within a five-year period, by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. The class size targets in this plan were supposed to be prescribed by then-State Education Commissioner Richard Mills following his consideration of the recommendations of an expert panel appointed by him. The State never convened this panel, and as an interim measure, in the 2007–2008 school year, the DOE created class size targets and proposed a plan for class size reduction, which was contingent upon available funding.

However, the targets in the proposed interim Class Size Plan were suspended by then-State Education Commissioner David Steiner during the 2009–2010 school year because of a shortfall in State funding due to the economic recession. Recognizing the fiscal realities at that time, NYSED suspended the class size targets and instead allowed the DOE to use Contracts for Excellence (C4E) money to focus on reducing class sizes in a target group of 75 underserved schools with large class sizes, which we did.

As Council is aware, the issue of whether the class size targets from the 2007 Class Size Plan are still in effect is the subject of litigation. NYSED has determined that those class size targets are no longer in effect. An appeal of that determination is pending in Supreme Court, Albany County, and therefore, the DOE is not able comment further on this matter.

Achieving class size reduction is contingent on funding, in particular from the State. New York City schools are funded through the FSF formula, which ensures that students with greater needs



**Department of
Education**
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

get additional funding. This funding is a combination of State and City funding, and the State is not doing its part. Under this administration and through partnership with the Council, we've been able to secure 90 percent of FSF for every single school, up from 81 percent at the start of this administration, investing a cumulative \$1 billion since the beginning of this administration in the formula.

We deeply appreciate the Council's support for raising the floor for FSF, and for funding many other priorities as well, including social workers, art teachers, sports teams, after school programs, and restorative justice programs. While these initiatives are not directly labeled as class size reduction initiatives, they show the Council's commitment to a robust education for all students, and they allow school administrators to use their funding to keep class sizes small.

In order to fund schools at 100 percent FSF and to give principals the resources to hire additional teachers to reduce class sizes, we need the State to fulfill its obligation to fully fund a sound basic education, as required by the New York State Court of Appeals' decision in the CFE case.

Class size limits in NYC schools are outlined in the City's contract with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Under the contract, class size limits are 18 students in pre-K, 25 students in kindergarten, 32 in elementary grades, 33 in middle schools (30 in Title 1 middle school), and 34 in high schools.

Average class sizes across all grades in NYC are well below the UFT contractual limits. The report on class size for school year 2019–2020 shows that across all grades, the overall average class size is 26.3 students per class. By grade-level, the average class size is 21.7 students in Kindergarten, 24.3 students in elementary school, 26.6 students in middle school core courses and 26.1 students in high school core courses.

We are also deliberate with the way in which we fund our schools through the Fair Student Funding formula. FSF is driven by equity, and the data shows it is successful in advancing it. Per capita budgets are higher at schools with high concentrations of students in poverty, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. As such, when we look at class sizes in schools with the highest concentration of economic need, we find that these schools have smaller class sizes than schools with the lowest concentration of economic need. On average, our neediest schools have an average class size of 23.5 and schools with the lowest concentration of economic need have an average class size of 28.4, a 4.9 difference. While we have made major new investments in FSF in partnership with the Council, the State owes New York City students \$1.1 billion in CFE funding in this fiscal year alone—funding which could go directly to schools as FSF.

That said, we know there are many schools across the City with class sizes that are larger than we would like. We continue to use all available tools to reduce overcrowding and class size, including adding new capacity, rezoning of enrollment catchment zones, efficiently managing the space in our underutilized sites, and careful budget management by school administrators.



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

Large class sizes are especially prevalent in schools that are in high demand by parents and students, including choice schools and high schools, such as Francis Lewis, Townsend Harris, Midwood, Brooklyn Tech, Curtis, Bronx High School of Science, and LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. Schools that offer a wide array of attractive programming options draw students from all boroughs and we place a high priority on meeting student demand. Many families choose to send their children to schools with specific academic programs, despite larger class sizes.

There is also strong correlation between overcrowding and large class sizes. For example, most elementary and middle schools in overcrowded districts such as District 20 in Brooklyn and District 24 in Queens have class sizes that are larger than the citywide average.

The Office of Space Planning (OSP) within the Division of School Planning and Development is responsible for monitoring building and school overutilization and devising appropriate strategies to reduce overcrowding. OSP regularly conducts cross-departmental meetings with the SCA, the Office of District Planning, the Office of Student Enrollment, the Division of School Facilities, and superintendents to evaluate seat need and consider strategies to relieve overcrowding. Strategies to alleviate and address overcrowding include grade expansion, grade truncation, rezoning of elementary and middle school catchment areas, opening of new schools, conversion of inefficient spaces in existing school facilities, and building new capacity.

An example of our efforts to reduce overcrowding and class size includes our work with Community Education Councils (CECs), and other community stakeholders to rezone the catchment areas of elementary and middle schools. Since the 2014–2015 school year, 185 schools have been rezoned.

One illustrative example of how the DOE partners with CECs to address overcrowding and class size is in District 24 in Queens, an area with a large number of overcrowded schools. In 2018, the DOE partnered with CEC 24 to create a zone for P.S. 211 in building Q298. The primary goals were to provide stable enrollment at P.S. 211, reduce the need to cap and overflow and reduce overcrowding at five nearby elementary schools. Along with accomplishing those goals, reducing the schools' zone sizes enabled four of the schools to decrease their average class size. In the two years since the rezoning was implemented, the average class size decreased by 1.4 from 29.1 to 27.7 at P.S. 13, by 0.9 from 26.5 to 25.6 at P.S. 14, by 1.5 from 26.1 to 24.6 at P.S. 28, and by 1.9 from 29.5 to 27.6 at P.S. 89.

In addition, SCA's ability to site and construct new schools has played a critical role in providing seats citywide in areas to reduce overcrowding and class size, accommodate anticipated growth and increase diversity. Since 2013, we have added nearly 55,000 new seats in all boroughs, including over 9,100 seats in Manhattan, over 7,300 seats in Bronx, over 11,200 seats in Brooklyn, over 23,200 seats in Queens, and over 3,600 seats in Staten Island. In addition to new capacity seats, a new Class Size Reduction Program was initiated in the FY2015–2019 Five Year Capital Plan. Projects in three schools, P.S. 19 Addition in Bronx, P.S. 131 Addition in Queens, and the new East New York Family Academy, were funded under the Class Size Reduction



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

Program to address persistent overcrowding in target schools. Our current FY2020–2024 Five-Year Capital Plan continues to fund \$150 million in this successful program.

This administration is making progress in reducing overcrowding and supporting smaller class sizes across the City, but we know that too many of our students attend schools with large class sizes or that are overcrowded.

We are grateful to Council for your advocacy in Albany and we look forward to our continued partnership this legislative season to push for the \$1.1 billion in CFE funding that will go directly to our schools to help support Equity and Excellence for All. This funding is what our students need and deserve and will allow our students to take their academic achievement to the next level.

Thank you again for allowing us to testify today, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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**TESTIMONY OF NEW YORK STATE SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION REGARDING SCHOOL CLASS SIZE REDUCTION**

FEBRUARY 28, 2020

My name is Brad Hoylman and I am the State Senator representing New York's 27th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Times Square, Greenwich Village, Midtown/East Midtown, the East Village, Columbus Circle, the Lower East Side, and the Upper West Side. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the New York City Council Committee on Education regarding school class size reduction.

As the elected representative for a district with thousands of families with young children, this issue is a primary concern for my constituents. And as a public school parent of two young daughters, this issue is also personal. My constituents and my children deserve every opportunity to succeed in school and class size is an integral factor that determines a student's success.

The benefits of smaller classes are numerous, observable, and empirically proven. We know from ongoing research that larger class sizes result in worse educational outcomes for most students. Small class size is an essential ingredient in a "sound basic education", which is the constitutional right of every child in New York State. Yet, children in New York City are denied this right in large part due to excessive class sizes.

A 2006 decision by the State's highest court even stated this explicitly, resulting in the Contracts for Excellence (C4E) law, which was passed by New York State in 2007. In exchange for additional funding, this law required the NYC Department of Education (DOE) to improve schools largely by reducing class size over five years. The law contained specific class size goals which varied by grade level and needed to be met by 2011. Many hoped that this law would finally move the needle on this problem that impacts all New York City students and families.

Despite over \$2 billion in cumulative aid since the law's inception, class sizes have continued to rise.¹ According to DOE's own data, the average class size across New York

¹ <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/FAQ-C4E-Final2.pdf>

City was 26.3 students, which is greater than any of the goals set in the 2007 C4E law for any grade level. This is unacceptable and must be rectified.

It must be noted that Albany bears much responsibility for these issues. I have spent the last several years in the State Legislature, including now with my dedicated colleague Robert Jackson who founded the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, fighting to ensure that New York City receives all the money it is owed by the state under CFE's lawsuit. We still have yet to see these debts fully repaid under an enacted budget. That has to change and soon. Albany cannot keep telling our children to wait another year for the education they deserve.

Yet I also believe that the city has a responsibility as well to provide its students with a better opportunity to learn, which is why I support the proposal for the Council to allocate \$100 million in next year's budget to invest in beginning the process of providing smaller classes that all NYC children need, but especially our most disadvantaged students. This amount would represent less than .3% of the DOE's overall budget for next year.

Reducing class size would benefit the performance and well-being of those who need it most, including low income and minority students and those with special needs. This is especially important when children are younger so that concerns can be addressed early before they compound. A 2011 paper published by the Brookings Institution stated "...it appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have significant long-term effects on student achievement and other meaningful outcomes. These effects seem to be largest when introduced in the earliest grades, and for students from less advantaged family backgrounds."²

Even the most competent and effective teachers cannot successfully teach and address the needs of each and every student in an overcrowded classroom because they cannot give everyone the attention they deserve. Overcrowded classrooms not only set up students to fail but also their teachers who cannot succeed in this environment.

I was extremely fortunate to have access to a world-class education. I want this for my children, constituents, and City. I strongly believe that our city needs to meet the challenges of systemic overcrowding and large class sizes. The impacts of education are long-lasting and extend well beyond the students we educate to those they touch in their lives and the contributions they make to our community and world—a community we must build together.

² <https://www.brookings.edu/research/class-size-what-research-says-and-what-it-means-for-state-policy/>



**TESTIMONY OF
THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY MICHAEL SILL**

**BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

REGARDING CLASS SIZE REDUCTION AND “ZOMBIE” CHARTER SCHOOLS

FEBRUARY 28, 2020

My name is Michael Sill, and I am the Assistant Secretary of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). On behalf of the more than 190,000 UFT members, I would like to thank Chair and UFT member Mark Treyger and all of the members of the Committee on Education for holding today’s very important hearing on class size reduction and “zombie” charter schools.

I would like to start by clearly stating that it could not be more appropriate for these two topics to be discussed together at the same hearing. The message from the State FY2021 Executive Budget is unmistakable: let’s first shortchange New York City (NYC) public schools \$136M while owing the students \$1.1B, which is funding that can be used to reduce class sizes, and then on top of that let’s exacerbate the financial problem by increasing the number of charter schools in NYC that will only drain more funding from our traditional public schools.

Enough is enough.

Background on Class Size Reduction Efforts

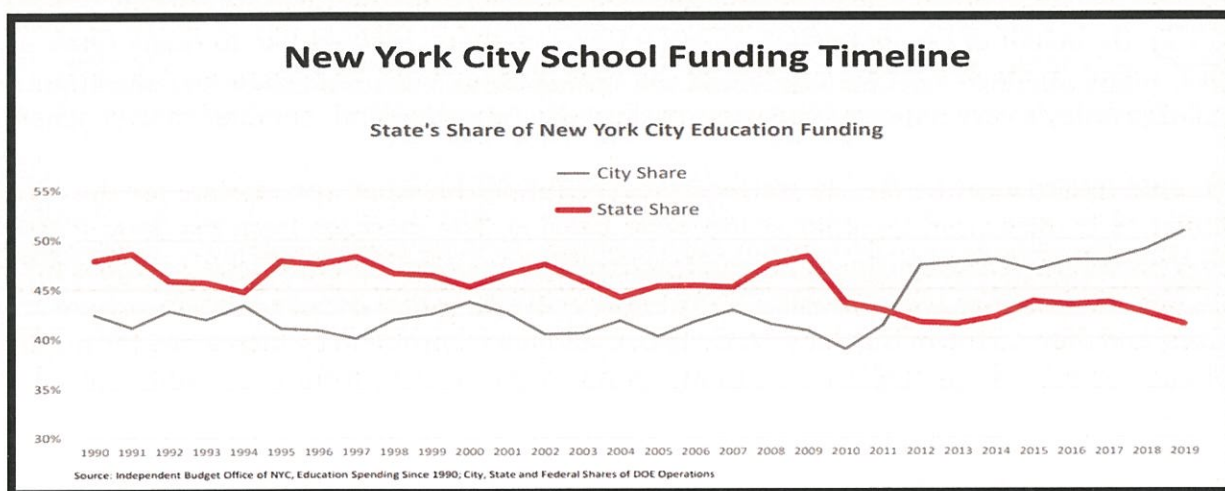
The most targeted program we have in NYC to reduce class sizes is Contracts for Excellence, which was implemented in 2007 as a result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) court case ruling. In essence, the program requires NYC to sign a contract with the State Education Department (SED) promising to use part of its total foundation aid allocation for the year to target specific schools that must subsequently spend the funding in specific target areas, with class size reduction as the most prominent target area.

As envisioned in 2007, the goal of the Contracts for Excellence program was to reduce class sizes over a 5-year period so that by fall 2011, all classroom enrollment across NYC would reflect the following numbers:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3: 20 students
- Grade 4 to Grade 8: 23 students
- Grade 9 to Grade 12 (core classes only): 25 students

While understandably ambitious, the 5-year period came and went and NYC public school classrooms failed to hit the set goalposts. Instead, NYC Department of Education (DOE) data from the 2011-2012 school year showed that 85% of students in K-3 were in classrooms with more than 20 students, 81% of students in grades 4-8 were in classrooms with more than 23 students, and 71% of high school students were in classrooms with more than 25 students.

The problem of overcrowded classrooms continued to persist after the 2011 to 2012 school year all the while funding from the State continued its precipitous decline. Interestingly enough, a recent report released by NYC Independent Budget Office shows that precisely in 2011 the State’s investment in NYC public schools as a percentage of the entire DOE budget began to fall below NYC’s investment. Since then, the State’s investment as a percentage of the total DOE budget has never rebounded and in 2019 hit its lowest in 30 years.



Funding the NYC DOE allocates to schools through Contracts for Excellence is intended to supplement existing programs in schools receiving the funding, not supplant or fill in gaps for existing programs. However, while the needs of NYC public school students continue to increase and the State’s investment in our public-school students continues to decline, schools have no other choice but to use Contracts for Excellence funds to fill in programming gaps in areas other than class size reduction. In the last decade, the number of students with special needs has increased by 63% and the number of English language learners has increased by 24%; meanwhile the number of homeless students has increased by 70%, with almost 1 in 10 students classified as homeless or living in temporary housing during the 2018 to 2019 school year.

The most recent data published by the NYC DOE on class sizes shows that during in the 2018 to 2019 school year we again failed to meet the goals set for the 2011 to 2012 school year. The data published by the NYC DOE shows the following estimated average classroom enrollment figures:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3: 24 students
- Grade 4 to Grade 8: 26.5 students
- Grade 9 to Grade 12 (core classes only): 26.4 students

Particularly egregious is the overcrowding in classrooms for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, with on average 4 more students in each classroom than set by the 2011 goal. Acknowledging that something needs to be done about overcrowded classrooms, the UFT decided to step in and take charge by establishing a new procedure in our contract with the NYC DOE that more effectively addresses teacher-issued complaints related to overcrowded classrooms.

UFT 2018 Contract Working to Reduce Class Size

It's no challenge to understand that smaller class sizes benefit both our public-school students and teachers. Smaller class sizes give teacher more time to differentiate instruction, invest more one-on-one time with students, and better assess the needs of each individual child. For these reasons, the UFT made reducing class size a priority in its most recent 2018 contract with the NYC DOE.

We know that reducing class sizes works for all. That is why we are also doing more with less funding and decided to add a new procedure that has led to a dramatic reduction in oversize classes in schools. At the usual annual benchmark – day 10 of the 2019 to 2020 school year – there were 350 schools with a total of 1,570 oversize classes, down from more than 400 schools and more than 2,000 oversize classes at that same time last year.

But in addition, thanks to a new procedure that empowered local superintendents working with UFT district representatives to intervene, by the middle of October 2019, 70 percent of the schools with oversize classes had eliminated them. By day 21 of the new school year, 105 schools had oversize classes.

Before the new procedure, the only rules that limit class size in New York City schools were those established in the UFT contract, making them enforceable through a process of hearings before independent third-party arbitrators who could order the principals to comply. But because of limits on hearing days, the process would take months; leaving classes oversized that entire time.

Under the new contract procedures negotiated in the 2018 agreement, principals have 10 days after school starts to reduce oversize classes to the contract limits. If they fail to do so,

the cases are referred to local superintendents, who can intervene to make sure principals bring the class sizes into line.

John Harrington, the UFT rep for District 24 in Queens, traditionally one of the most overcrowded districts in New York City recently said, “the change in the contract created a much greater level of urgency around oversized classes, and made fixing them a priority. In the past, it was a lower priority. A sense of urgency wouldn’t kick in until the DOE called to say the school’s class size arbitration hearing had been set.”

Last school year the district had 82 oversized classes across 20 schools on Day 6 and 34 still by Day 10 across 12 schools- and all were sent to arbitration. This year Harrington said his district had 103 oversized classes on Day 6 across 20 schools, and that was down to 27 by Day 10 across 10 schools and zero oversized classes by October. Harrington said District 24 is known as an overcrowded district, so this is a real improvement, good for students, teachers and staff.

Now imagine what could be done if schools could properly invest the funding allocated to them through Contracts for Excellence to reduce class size? Funding from the State in the tune of the \$1.1B that is still owed to NYC public school students would not only reinforce the achievements of the new procedure, but will ultimately help us get to a place where we have zero oversized classrooms across all of NYC at the start of each school year.

“Zombie” Charter Schools are a Nonstarter

While the State FY 2021 Executive Budget proposes shortchanging NYC public school students and makes no mention of a commitment to pay the money it owes the school district, it is bold about its proposal to circumvent the cap on new charter schools in New York City by allowing a charter that is a reissuance of a surrendered, revoked or terminated charter to not count against the cap—reviving 18 so-called “zombie” charters. It’s unconscionable to accept such a proposal while knowing that charters drain funding from our public schools that are siphoned into dark spaces that lack transparency and accountability. The NYC public school system already spends \$2.4B in charter schools annually.

We must keep the charter school cap in place and avoid bringing back “zombie” charters. A loophole in existing law allows for a single charter issued by the state to operate three schools. A charter, for example, may be initially granted to serve grades k-5, but in the future may apply for a charter revision to add on subsequent grades up until grade 12. There are some charters that operate pre-k through grade 12, meaning they run an elementary, middle and high school, essentially three schools under one charter. The existing loophole already allows for many charters to grow, there is no need to statutorily increase the cap.

Additionally, with the expansion of charter schools inevitably comes the potential need for the City and State to provide new charter schools funding to operate in private spaces. New York City already spends over \$60M in charter school facilities aid, and this year’s State

Executive Budget includes a \$50 million allocation, up from \$31.5 million in last year's Enacted Budget, for NYC charter school facilities aid. These are public taxpayer dollars that ultimately end up in the hands of private landlords.

In addition to echoing the City Council's call to keep the charter cap in place, we urge the City Council to call on the State Legislature and the Governor to pass and sign S.5950 (Mayer)/A.8029 (Benedetto) that limits the school grade level expansions for charter schools so that one charter does not virtually allow for three schools to exist is a part of the enacted budget, and S.6043 (Liu)/A.8027 (Benedetto) that will repeal the ever-increasing charter school facilities aid that continues to siphon public dollars into the private real estate industry.

Closing Thoughts

Achieving our goal of making sure 100% of all of our classrooms in NYC are not oversized by the first day of school will only be possible when the State decides to properly invest in our public schools. Until then, because we fundamentally understand the value of small class sizes, we at the UFT will continue to act as we did with our new class size reduction procedure. It's time for us as a city to unite and say enough siphoning off public taxpayer dollars to charter schools and enough shortchanging our public-school students. Let's continue our collective advocacy work until we get Albany to understand that without their fair share, our students will also have to continue to do more with less.

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TESTIMONY

FOR THE RECORD

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
CHAIRMAN, MARK TREYGER

Oversight – Class Size Reduction

Presented on
Friday, February 28, 2020



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Good afternoon, Chairman Treyger, and distinguished members of the City Council. The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) represents some 17,000 in-service and retired Principals, Assistant Principals, Educational Administrators and Directors/Assistant Directors of City-funded Early Childhood Centers. Our city's school leaders thank you for recognizing the critical issue of class size and how it impacts our ability to provide all students with a high-quality education.

NYC public schools currently have the largest class sizes in the state. In the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, New York's highest court found that the city's children were denied their constitutional right to an adequate education, in large part due to excessive class sizes. According to the DOE's Learning Environment surveys, reducing class size is the top priority of the city's parents. School leaders whole-heartedly agree: 86% of NYC principals say they cannot provide a quality education because their classes are too large. Yet, class sizes have continued to increase in NYC.

We believe that we must reduce class sizes throughout New York City to create optimum learning environments for our students. In order to do so, administrators need more resources. Closing the gap in Fair Student Funding (FSF) and providing our schools with 100% FSF will allow school leaders to not only reduce class size but also ensure their support staff has the training and resources required to meet the educational needs of all students and improve school climate and safety. Thus, fully funding FSF must be the first priority. Once the formula is fully funded, additional targeted resources should be allocated for further class size reduction.

Reducing class size is one of the few educational strategies shown to increase learning for all students, yielding both cognitive and non-cognitive benefits. The most compelling and credible evidence emanated from the study of Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) published in 1990 and its subsequent follow-up reports. According to STAR, as well as numerous other studies, the benefits of lowering class sizes are particularly pronounced for lower-income students and children of color, who experience two to three times the gains from smaller classes.

Related research is abundant, including studies from the Educational Research Service, Johns Hopkins University, and the Educational Testing Service. The Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the US Department of Education, has also provided rigorous evidence in citing class size reduction as one of four K-12 reforms that have been shown to work. Large-scale randomized experiments reveal that children in smaller classes in the early grades get higher test scores, better grades, fewer disciplinary referrals, and are more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and own their own homes more than twenty years later.

Furthermore, several studies indicate that smaller classes have a positive impact on school climate, students' socio-emotional growth, safety and suspension rates, parent engagement, and teacher attrition, especially in schools with disadvantaged students. Common sense suggests that these factors are of the utmost importance at the middle and high school levels.

Although experiments in class size reduction in the early grades have not been replicated in the middle and upper grades, many controlled studies indicate that students in smaller classes, in both middle and high school, achieve higher test scores, are more engaged, and are less likely to drop out of school than students in large classes.

Here are a few other data points that support the argument for smaller classes:

- In California, the Quality Education Act of 2006 provided funding for reducing class size to 20 students in grades K-3 and 25 students in grades 4-12 in schools with large numbers of low income, minority students and English language learners. Since then, 85% of these schools have met their goals for improving outcomes.
- In 2003, Florida voters approved a change in their constitution, requiring a gradual reduction of class size in all grades. This led to a cap of 18 in grades PreK-3, 22 in 4th-8th grades and 25 in high school. Between 2003 and 2011, the state's students experienced significant gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which is considered the gold standard of assessments. These caps also led to a narrowing of the achievement gap between white and black students.
- Finally, students of Finland are consistently among the developed nations' highest achievers on the international assessment known as the Program for International Assessment (PISA). Finland has the smallest class sizes among the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) nations, averaging 21 or less in all grades, and also ranks among the most equitable, with little variation in class size across schools. According to experts, including the former Finnish Education Secretary, a key reason for their success in comparison to other nations with similar demographics is their small class size.

Since lowering class sizes is one of the few education reforms shown to improve student outcomes, narrow the achievement gap and improve school climate, investing in smaller classes should be a top priority. The data provide strong evidence that NYC students would benefit greatly from smaller classes.

CSA remains available to work collaboratively with all other interested parties to ensure that we absorb the lessons that this research offers and finally reduce the size of classes system-wide throughout NYC.

Respectfully,

Henry Rubio

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**City Council Education Committee
Oversight Hearings on Class Size
City Hall Committee Room
Friday, February 28, 2020 at 10AM**

My name is Vern Ballard. I am here today to give testimony at the behest of my dear friend Leonie Hamison because Class Size Matters!

My wife and I have two lovely and amazing daughters who are ten and twelve, in 5th and 7th grades. I came very late to parenting and was 39 when I had my eldest was born. Wized by those extra years, I committed myself to ensuring they receive the best education possible in the best city in the world. My wife and I are products of public schools from kindergarten through college degrees. In fact, for the past 30 years I have worked for the City University of New York.

To prepare for a dozen years of fraught adventures in NYC parenting, when my girls were still toddlers, long before they were enrolled in school, I was Co-Chair of Community Board 9 Youth, Education and Library Committee and then a member of Community Education Council for District 3. I also spent a year on the Parent Commission on Mayoral Control, critiquing the Bloomberg Administration's awful stewardship of public schools while ardently advocating for more sensible and effective solutions.

From these perches I had comprehensive and intimate views of the challenges, shortcomings, and failures that besiege public schools and their families on the Upper West Side, Central and West Harlem: socio-economic inequity across the entire school system that is segregated by race and class leading to disturbing and persistent racial achievement gaps, mayhem in the bureaucratic administration of special education that traumatizes already challenged families, curriculums tailored to accommodate scholastically dubious high stakes tests, low high school graduation rates, and, today's topic, classroom overcrowding. All of these factors culminate with droves of NYC public school high school graduates under-prepared for the rigors of college and the competitive workplace.

There were, of course, occasionally reports of triumphs in achievement, construction, or newly founded schools. But usually when parents, teachers, and administrators come to a Community Board or CEC meeting, they are at their wits end frantically struggling to resolve a distressing problem.

With all this in mind, as our girls came of school age, my wife and I braced for a dozen years of bureaucratic warfare with the public school system. But fortune smiled on us. We won the lottery! Both our girls were admitted to the School at Columbia University, an experimental community school forged by a public private compact that resulted in 50% of its seats being reserved for a lottery of children from Districts 3 and 5.

The School is a veritable utopia with a cadre of academic and social emotional learning specialists, no high-stakes tests pressures on teachers, administrators, or students, and, in my estimation, most importantly, small class sizes. In primary school (K-3) each class of 12 students has two lead teachers. In Intermediate and Middle Division classes with up to 24 students are taught by a single teacher, but all classes are supported by a cadre of math, literary, language, and SEL counselors and advisors. With all this cadre of instructors, our teacher-student ratio is 4:1.

But even in utopia there are regular challenges, shortcomings and failures. I'm not going to air my grievances with paradise in this forum, but you better believe I marshal the skills that I honed in preparation for public schools to challenge them. Nevertheless, our girls are among the fortunate and privileged few. In a city of a million students, they are among the 1% that are learning in small classes.

We have many friends in public school and I can assure you private school kids are not better or smarter than their peers. But I strongly believe that, on the whole, they are better prepared because their teachers are less stressed and stretched-thin and can therefore be much more engaged and attentive. As a parent, I know I'm much less stressed. One of the things I never have to worry about are my girls slipping between the cracks because their teachers are overwhelmed by the challenges of engaging far too many young minds at once.

Finally, as a proud product of public schools, I often regret abandoning my quixotic duty to fight the noble public school fight. But this regret is fleeting knowing that half a dozen years after Bloomberg that the progressive DeBlasio administration continues to fail a generation of public school children, literally. (A 77% graduation rate should be grounds for embarrassment not bragging.)

Reducing class sizes won't resolve all the problems in public schools, but it will rectify many. It's long past time to implement the recommendations of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. After 17 years of stepping sideways and backwards, the \$100 million investment to be focused on reducing class sizes that Class Size Matters is now recommending is a small, stabilizing step forward.

Testimony by Kathy Park Price, Brooklyn Parent Leader and Community Advocate
Council Hearing, Education Committee
Fund Class Size Reduction
Friday, February 28, 2020

FOR THE RECORD

My name is Kathy Park Price. I'm the parent of two elementary school students in D15 Brooklyn and the founder of Citizen Squirrel, a Brooklyn-based initiative that engages families with young children to be civically engaged. I'm also a member of CEC15 and the chair of Human Services for Brooklyn Community Board 6.

I'm here because I want all New York City children to get the attention they need to thrive today and become contributing members of society tomorrow. Educators, parents and even students say that this starts with smaller class sizes. We all know the data that backs this up because Class Size Matters has been fighting for 15 years, but common sense tells us that smaller class sizes leads to more teacher attention as well as student attention.

I didn't realize it but my 6-year old daughter wasn't reading at grade level at the beginning of the school year. My 8-year old son had been a voracious reader at an early age, but I didn't want to compare them and was told by educators that students develop reading at various levels. It's true, but there are other delays that can become significant if not caught. Because my daughter's class size happens to be smaller, her teachers noticed a delay and created an action plan. They let me and my husband know and we were also able to support our daughter with a reading specialist. The teachers were also able to give her more support in class.

In a larger classroom, even the most qualified teacher could have easily missed the delay or not had the bandwidth to support if they had so many students. In that scenario, a minor delay would have snowballed into a major delay and would have, in the long run, taxed the student and the school system even more. Based on research, we know that class size is the most important in Kindergarten through 3rd grade, when the foundation is built. I'm so grateful that my child's teachers were able to spot a delay. Just four months later, my daughter is just about on grade level because her teachers were able to see that reading wasn't clicking easily with her. She's really bright, but she just needed that extra bit of support that is absolutely not available in a large classroom.

District 15 has seen a 8.9% increase in K-3rd class size since 2006, and a 17.8% increase in 4th-8th class size since 2006. K-3rd class sizes were smaller than the NY State Legislature's Contracts for Excellence (C4E) goal in 2006 by 0.9 students per class, but are now larger than the C4E goal in 2019 by 4.0 students per class. 4th-8th class sizes were smaller than C4E goal in 2006 by 2.0 students per class, but are now larger than the C4E goal in 2019 by 4.9 students per class.

I can't help but connect the fight for smaller class sizes to the big conversations we are having nationally. We are in a moment when people are realizing the solutions that once felt radical are, in fact, widely supported and must be achieved. New York City's class sizes should be smaller as class size reduction is one thing we know for sure boosts educational achievement and supports social-emotional development for all of our children.

Thank you.

Kathy Park Price
kathypricenyc@gmail.com



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education

Re: Class Size Reduction

February 28, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about reducing class size in the New York City public schools. My name is Randi Levine, and I am Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York (AFC). For nearly 50 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. Every year, we help thousands of individual families navigate the New York City school system.

When Advocates for Children does workshops for families on the kindergarten admissions process, parents are often surprised to learn that kindergarten classes can have as many as 25 students. Families, especially those whose children have disabilities or are learning English as a new language, worry about how their children will get the attention they need when the teacher has to focus on two dozen children. AFC is similarly concerned about students sitting in large classes, where it is difficult for teachers to manage challenging behaviors in a supportive, trauma-informed manner and to appropriately differentiate instruction to meet the needs of a range of learners.

For example, the early elementary grades are a critical period for literacy development; students who are not proficient readers by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma. Every year, Advocates for Children hears from families of students with dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities who have made it to middle or high school without ever having mastered foundational literacy skills. This is in part due to the fact that students who struggle with reading are more likely to slip through the cracks—their difficulties unnoticed and unaddressed—when they are one of 25 or 30 children in a classroom than when they are one of 15 or 20. Yet according to the preliminary class size report for the current school year, more than 17,000 kindergarteners are in classes of 25 or more students, while 8,400 first graders are in classrooms with at least 30 children.

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When a child is struggling with reading and needs extra help, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. To be effective, instruction and intervention must be targeted to an individual student's specific areas of need; without such targeted, evidence-based intervention, students fall further and further behind and the consequences grow increasingly severe. But even the most skilled and well-trained classroom teachers can only provide prompt, individualized support to a limited number of children; a teacher faced with a large number of struggling students will be forced to conduct educational triage. This is particularly concerning in light of the fact that only 43% of Black and Hispanic third graders in New York City scored proficient in reading on the 2019 state tests.

Finally, in our casework at AFC, we have seen large class size pose a barrier to the full inclusion of students with disabilities. When a student with a disability is overwhelmed in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class with 30 students and struggling to keep up, the only option is to move to a more restrictive setting—a self-contained special education class, which has far fewer students, but provides no opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers in the classroom. There is a subset of students for whom a 30-person class is clearly inappropriate, but whose needs are not so significant as to require a special education class. Reducing class size would disproportionately benefit this population of students with disabilities, who could both receive appropriate support for their learning needs *and* reap the advantages of inclusion in a more reasonably-sized ICT class.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



mindful education lab

Joshua Aronson, Ph.D.
Director, Mindful Education Lab
Associate Professor of Applied Psychology

New York University
726 Broadway, Rm. 505
New York, NY 10003

Testimony on Class Size, February 27th, 2020

Joshua Aronson, PhD
New York University

I am a professor of psychology and education at NYU. I am pretty well known for research on race and gender disparities in STEM learning and standardized test performance.¹ I have also conducted extensive research on the achievement gap between students of color and phenomena known as "stereotype threat" and "growth mindset, which are well known to educators."² I have been conducting research on learning and classrooms for about twenty-five years, and have taught courses on learning and education for the same amount of time. I have taught classes of all sorts at NYU from large lectures to tiny seminars, and sometimes teach in public school classrooms in order to empathize with the teachers and understand their current work. I am currently on the board of a number of schools, my role is to help them become better at nurturing the intelligence and character of any child that walks through their doors. I'm the father of two public school students, and am myself the product of the public schools.

Also an author. I'm currently writing a book about the art and science of highly effective schooling, schooling that reliably produces kids who are noticeably above their peers in important ways— smarter, kinder, and happier. This is the kind of young people we need to take the reins of the future of this country—big brains, but also big hearts. Extraordinarily good

¹<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/news/five-steinhardt-faculty-members-ranked-most-influential-policy-scholars-nation>

² Aronson, J., Fried, C. B., & Good, C. (2002). Reducing the effects of stereotype threat on African American college students by shaping theories of intelligence. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 38(2), 113-125; Aronson, J., & Dee, T. (2012). Stereotype threat in the real world. *Stereotype threat: Theory, process, and application*, 264-278; Good, C., Aronson, J., & Inzlicht, M. (2003). Improving adolescents' standardized test performance: An intervention to reduce the effects of stereotype threat. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24(6), 645-662.

schools can do this. But it's not easy, it's difficult. Still, there is a recipe that I will describe in the book. A key, indispensable ingredient in this recipe is smallness, because the aim is to create a sense of community where people care about and cooperate with one another. The larger the group, the harder this is to do.

The star of my story is a public school in Maryland (which I will call Maryland Elementary), a poorly funded little public school in coal mining country. Somehow the school did a massive turnaround, elevating extremely low income, low performing students in profound ways. In just four years the school's state test scores rose from the lowest in the state to the very top. That, to me, looked too good to be true; especially considering all they had done was to hire a new principal. It was a lovely story, but most of the research and experience at the time suggested that it requires more time, more resources—and especially more firing of “bad” teachers and hiring “good” ones—to turn around a failing school.³ Was this another pressured school cheating on their annual tests to avoid being punished under *No Child Left Behind*? Lots of schools cheated under pressure to raise test scores, often hurting children in the process, sometimes destroying them.⁴

But when I visited the school my suspicion faded and rather quickly turned to awe. They weren't cheating at all. Nor had they become a test prep operation, as so many schools do when under the gun to produce growth, or the appearance of growth. There were no signs that they had narrowed the curriculum to focus scores on tests. In fact, these kids spent more time outside playing and exploring and working with their hands than they did prepping for tests. I never saw them preparing for tests or even discussing them. The social science data on the effects of test based accountability on school behavior raised many suspicions about the rapid improvement.⁵ But none of them were confirmed.

In my repeated observations of the school, what I saw instead was what I seldom see during visits to New York City public schools: classrooms with almost complete intellectual, psychological, and behavioral engagement from all the children, all the time. The students were eager to learn. A sense of calm, inclusion, trust, and kindness seemed to pervade every classroom and nearly every interaction. Immediately I wondered: *How do I get my child here?*

What was the secret? What accounts for this massive success? The new principal had learned some simple but vital truths about the psychology of teaching and learning, and with this knowledge she built a culture that uncompromisingly aligned itself to those truths.

³ Dee, T. (2012). *School turnarounds: Evidence from the 2009 stimulus* (No. w17990). National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁴Heilig, J. V., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). Accountability Texas-style: The progress and learning of urban minority students in a high-stakes testing context. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(2), 75-110.

⁵ Ravitch, D. (2016). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. Basic Books; National Research Council. (2011). *Incentives and test-based accountability in education*. National Academies Press.

The foundational truth is this: all children can become eager, curious learners, *but only when key physical and social needs are met*. This school therefore takes very seriously getting to know each child and their family, so seriously those needs come into sharp focus and the school can do their best to meet them.

It sounds simple enough, but takes time, care, compassion—and *most importantly—small class sizes*. To know children and their families well enough to make kids smarter, nicer and happier, it is critical to keep class size small. This fosters a sense of belonging, and reduces the chances that a child's difficulties will go unnoticed. Children in small classes cannot easily hide their challenges and misunderstandings and this means they end up learning more effectively.

It is a lawful fact in education that student teacher-student relationships matter for learning.⁶ We all know this so well that we may take it for granted. But rare schools like this show how much can be gained by prioritizing relationships.

Specifically, Maryland Elementary illustrates several research findings on the important benefits of a smaller, more intimate learning environments:

1. **Improved achievement.** Students show both short term and long term success when classes are small during the early grades.⁷ Not all analyses conclude that it's always good to reduce class size.⁸ But most of the data supports class size reduction. At the Maryland school the success seems to be long lasting, the effects of elementary school evident in high school achievement.⁹ For example, in addition to maintaining their high test scores, Maryland Elementary regularly produces more graduates who win national honor society awards than all the other elementary schools in the district combined. Kids that attend this once abysmal elementary school are now many times more likely to wind up in Advanced Placement classes years later in high school than their counterparts who attend other schools. The school has won a slew of awards, including intel science research prizes, and National Principal of the year. One powerful marker of this success: Although 86% of the students live beneath the poverty line, the school's reputation is now attracting wealthier families to the district. literally enriching the community. When I interview teachers in middle school and high school they tell me things like this: *You can always tell the kids who come from Maryland Elementary; they ask the best questions and are the best behaved.*

6

⁷ Karl Fritjof Krassel & Eskil Heinesen (2014) *Class-size effects in secondary school*, *Education Economics*, 22:4,412-426, DOI: 10.1080/09645292.2014.902428

⁸ Li, W., & Konstantopoulos, S. (2017). Does class-size reduction close the achievement gap? Evidence from TIMSS 2011. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 28(2), 292-313.

⁹ Francis, J., & Barnett, W. S. (2019). Relating preschool class size to classroom quality and student achievement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 49, 49-58.

2. **Reduced negative effects of race and gender match.** Children in diverse environments appear to learn less well from teachers who have different backgrounds. Black students get lower test scores in classes taught by white teachers and vice versa, and girls get lower math scores in classes taught by male teachers. This was confirmed in the famous Tennessee STAR experiment, which randomly assigned students to classes that were either large or small. It was a big advantage to have a teacher of the same race or gender. But this effect was nonexistent in small classes. We cannot know precisely why it is better to have a black teacher if you are black or a white teacher if you are white—is it teacher bias, a lack of trust, a role model effect, perhaps?¹⁰ We cannot be certain, but clearly whatever dynamic penalizes students for not having a teacher of the same race or gender, it seems to evaporate in smaller classes.¹¹ When we know people as individuals, stereotyping tends to diminish. Students want to feel known and appreciated as individuals rather than as *the black girl in the third row*.
3. **Improved relationships.** We recently interviewed 14-year-olds who had attended Maryland Elementary school between Kindergarten and -5th grade. One girl's response was characteristic of most students and confirmed many hours of observing classrooms by my team:

Q: Did you ever witness fighting or arguing or bullying?

A: "Never. I think I remember one time a kid saying something that wasn't super nice to another kid, and he was made to apologize...but that's pretty much it. Kids were nice there. Not like my school now."

4. **Teachers are willing to work for less salary.** Studies show that teachers want smaller classes, want better relationships with students, and believe smaller classes improve their effectiveness. Ultimately most teachers appear willing to sacrifice significant pay for the experience of really making a difference. I had seen this data before, but it hit me over the head in Maryland when I met a new teacher at the school. A mother of three boys, she was working for a salary of only \$15,000 per year. She told me that she had recently turned down an offer for \$34,000 at another nearby elementary school. "It's tempting but just not worth it," she said. The feeling here is too special, the love...the gratitude...the success..." In the other school, her salary would have more than doubled, but so would her class size. Each visit to the school I meet another volunteer who is there to help out, because smallness promotes a sense of community. Big schools with large classes tend to foster a sense of bureaucracy. In all my years studying schools, I have yet to see people eager to volunteer time for a bureaucracy. But when you really do right by children, everyone wants to help out and be part of the community. Each time

¹⁰ Paredes, V. (2014). A teacher like me or a student like me? Role model versus teacher bias effect. *Economics of Education Review*, 39, 38-49.

¹¹ Dee, T. S. (2005). A teacher like me: Does race, ethnicity, or gender matter?. *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 158-165.

I visit the school someone new is offering free labor. Kindness to children begets more kindness to children.

To be sure, size alone cannot guarantee this kind of community. Manageable class sizes aren't sufficient to fix our schools. But I believe smallness may be necessary to creating the powerful school culture I have described, especially in underserved populations. When a school is a community it can accomplish what bureaucratic schools can only dream of— nearly 100% engagement, attracting free labor, and regularly turning out high caliber students whose advantages persist seven years after leaving the school. Clearly this is expensive, but mainly at the outset. When schools function this well, the social benefits can begin to accrue outweigh the up front costs—in my opinion, and in the opinion of nearly every teacher and principal I have ever met.

And this is why sending your child to the best and most expensive schools in the country— Choate, Andover, Exeter—means your child will take classes no larger than 8-10 students. Why do the best schools in America insist on small classes? Because they know what Maryland Elementary knows. Small is beautiful. And it works.

**New York City Council Committee on Education
Oversight Hearing on Class Size Reduction**

February 28, 2020

We would like to thank the New York City Council's Committee on Education for holding this important oversight hearing on class size reduction. INCLUDEnyc (formerly Resources for Children with Special Needs) has worked with hundreds of thousands of families since our founding 37 years ago, helping them navigate the complex special education service and support systems.

We testify today to highlight the need for smaller classes and urge the the city to allocate additional funds in this year's budget towards hiring more teachers. There is a direct relationship between class size and the over referral of general education students for special education services, a teacher's ability to deliver student-centered instruction and interventions with fidelity, and effective classroom management. These factors lead to inferior proficiency and graduation rates for students with disabilities, and the extent in which the nearly 220,000 school-age students with IEPs in New York City public schools are college and career ready.

For example, math proficiency rates for students with disabilities in Grades 3-8 last year (2018-19) was 18% compared to 53% for general education students. There is an even greater gap in English, with only 16% of students with disabilities scoring proficient compared to 53% of non disabled students. In addition, only 53% of students with disabilities graduated in four years compared to a graduation rate of 77% for all students.

More teachers leads to smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes, coupled with supporting teachers with more training, would allow teachers to provide differentiated instruction and meet the individualized special education, social, and behavioral needs of students. With fewer students in the classroom, teachers will have the ability to give and document methodologies and interventions such as Response to Intervention (RtI), implement Universally Designed Learning, and, most importantly, to teach foundational literacy skills such as reading and writing.

In order to close the achievement gap in New York City between disabled and non disabled students, we believe all teachers need training in the following areas:

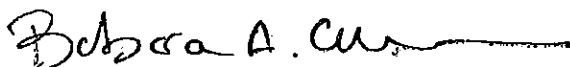
- Basic characteristics of disabilities, especially learning, emotional, intellectual, physical, ADHD, and sensory processing disorders
- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
- Behavioral supports, interventions, and strategies
- Effective co-teaching

- Value of inclusion and creating an inclusive school and classroom environment
- How to partner with parents in their child's education

The quality of academics and support for students with disabilities should not be compromised because they are educated in inclusive general education and Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classrooms that are too large.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these important matters. We look forward to working with you to improve equity and access for all students with disabilities in New York City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara A. Glassman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Barbara A. Glassman
Executive Director

Testimony re: 2020-2021 Executive Budget Proposal—Higher Education

Submitted to
New York City Council Committee on Education

Submitted by Diana E. Cruz
Director of Education Policy at Hispanic Federation

February 28th, 2020

On behalf of Hispanic Federation, we thank you, committee members, for taking the time to hear and read our testimony. Hispanic Federation is a non-profit organization seeking to empower and advance the Hispanic community, support Hispanic families, and strengthen Latino institutions through direct service programs and legislative advocacy.

Classroom Sizes Effects of Underserved Students' Academic Success

Class size has shown to have a direct effect on students' learning, educational success, and is one of the primary variables in the education system that has shown long-term benefits for students. Smaller classes support teachers' effectiveness to provide individual support to students. This is especially critical for students with higher academic needs, disabilities, and for multilingual learners. The advantages of smaller classrooms expand beyond better grades and test scores. Students in smaller classes have shown higher engagement, less disciplinary referrals, focused learning, and better higher education results. When teachers have the ability to individualize their methods based on a students' need, rather than providing general instruction due to large class sizes, it increases the likelihood of students graduating high school and achieving postsecondary success.

Currently, in New York City (NYC), the number of students per teacher ratio has increased significantly compared to the rest of the state, where more than 325,000 NYC students are in classrooms of 30 or more.¹ The class sizes are increasing at alarming rates, where the number of first through third graders in classes of 30 or more has grown by nearly 3000% and by 40% in grades fourth to eighth.²

To remedy this issue, Hispanic Federation strongly supports a \$100 million allocation in the city budget to support the reduction of class sizes in PreK-12 classrooms. In it imperative that early education and schools who primarily serve academically at-risk students are prioritized when allocating funding for reduced class. This funding is intended to allow schools to hire additional certified teachers with the skills necessary to meet student needs and, in turn reduce class sizes.

¹ NYSED for 2016-2017; <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pmf/>

² *Id.*



Teachers and parents advocating and prioritizing smaller classrooms is nothing new. The New York City Department of Education conducted a survey which showed that 99% of NYC teachers believe that a class size reduction will be an effective way to improve NYC schools³. School districts are on board to make this a reality, but there is a necessary funding required.

ESOL and Bilingual Teacher Shortage

Further, it is not just additional teachers that are needed in the classroom. NYC needs teachers who have specialties, who are qualified and certified to teach students who need specific care and instruction. Funding to reduce class sizes and increase the number of teachers will directly address the shortage crisis of ESOL and bilingual teachers. Multilingual learner students are growing at a rapid rate, where currently, they make up almost 15% of the student population.⁴ When we look at the numbers statewide, NYC holds 63% of the state’s multilingual learners.⁵ For many of these students, Pre-K is the first year of their formal education. The reality is that a large percentage of these students do not speak English at home and in order to adequately facilitate their academic growth, New York City must provide funding to support the decrease of classroom sizes and the increase of certified teachers.

As outlined above, the number of Multilingual Learners has been growing, but the resources and supports offered to these students has not. Classroom sizes and higher teacher supports are necessary to provide these students with successful educational outcomes. This is especially true when we look at the lack of certified Bilingual Education (BE) and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers. In fact, there is a 10% shortage in the number of certified teachers across the state and may be higher in the city⁶.

The lack of attention to reduce classroom sizes is having a negative effect on Multilingual Learners and if this issue is addressed, it can change these students’ school outcomes. Dropout rates should never be higher than graduation rates. Yet, in 2017, the four-year MLL dropout rate was 30%, higher than the 27% four-year state graduation rate and the 28% city graduation rate.⁷

³ Survey of NYC Public Schools Principals, 2008 https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/principal_survey_report_10.08_final1.pdf

⁴ New York City to add almost 50 bilingual programs, the latest in a push to help English learners, Chalkbeat, 2018; <https://chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/05/03/new-york-city-to-add-50-bilingual-programs-the-latest-in-a-push-to-help-english-learners/>

⁵ NYSED, New York State Report Card, 2008-2017; <https://data.nysed.gov/>

⁶ LEAD Coalition “Investing in our Future” report; <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c3676da3e2d09759ab10f10/t/5c86dd27652dea82b0957191/1552342343369/Invest-In-Our-Future-002.pdf>

⁷ NYSED, NYS Graduation Rate as of June, Data.NYSED (3/19/2019); <https://data.nysed.gov/gradrate.php?state=yes&year=2018&cohortgroup=0&lep%5B%5D=1>

In comparison, New York State's four-year graduation rate for all students was 71% and 80% across New York State. This issue cannot continue to be ignored⁸.

In the same year, only 13% of MLLs were proficient in math and 5% in English in NYS assessments⁹. These numbers clearly demonstrate how paramount immediate action is for this group of students. New York City must do better by its multilingual student population and lowering classroom sizes and employing certified ESOL and bilingual teachers will make a difference.

In conclusion, the Hispanic Federation strongly urges the inclusion of a \$100 million allocation in the city budget to support the reduction of class sizes in PreK-12 classrooms. This funding will ensure that teachers are supported, will reduce classroom sizes, and will increase the number of necessary certified teachers to meet students' individual needs. We can no longer accept that students who are the most at risk of not excelling in school are not given the necessary tools needed to simply do well. These children will one day become the adults that shape our communities, we must give them every chance available to do better and be better than we are.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

Thank you for holding a public hearing on this important topic.

My name is Sarah Morgridge. I was a public school parent from 1986 to 2007. For twelve years I was education liaison, Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant for Councilmember Robert Jackson. I currently work for a nonprofit, Literacy, INC. that was founded by Mimi Levin Lieber; Ms. Lieber served on the Board of Regents for 15 years and Literacy, INC. or LINC as it is known works with families and children across all five boroughs in high-poverty neighborhoods. LINC is the backbone partner of the City Council’s collaborative early literacy initiative, City’s First Readers. I care about public education.

You cannot hold a hearing on class size without also discussing the NYC School Construction Authority Capital Plan and the determinates of need set forth in the Capacity, Enrollment and Utilization Report. Reducing class size means NYC needs more classrooms. The question becomes – how many? Well, that depends on which class size yardstick you use.

There is the UFT contract yardstick, the Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report (or Blue Book) yardstick and the Contract for Excellence yardstick. Each sets different limits.

GRADE LEVEL	UFT	BLUE BOOK	CONTRACT FOR EXCELLENCE
Pre K	18	18	(18 de facto)
K	25	20	19.9
1-3		20	19.9
1-6	31		
4-8	<i>33 Non-Title I; 30 Title I UFT website has old info</i>	28	22.9
HS	34	28	24.5 core classes

There are very different levels of need depending on which yardstick is used. Clearly far fewer middle school seats will appear to be needed if class size is pegged at 33 or 28 versus what the state has determined is appropriate – 23. Clearly far fewer class rooms will appear to be needed at the high school level if class size is set at 34 or 28 versus 25 students cited in the state standards.

State standards in the Contract for Excellence were developed in consultation with academic experts who have studied the impact of class size on academic outcomes. They are independent of budget considerations – or realities. They are independent of political negotiations. Contracts for Excellence class size standards are the real deal. WHY WOULD THE CITY OF NEW YORK USE CLASS SIZE STANDARDS THAT ARE NOT SUPPORTING OPTIMAL ACADEMIC OUTCOMES? Yes, they may be aspirational, but any standard that does not use academic outcomes as its primary consideration is severely flawed.

Contracts for Excellence class sizes are what should be used to measure our school buildings to see if more classrooms and more seats are needed. The School Construction Authority takes care with its design process to build educational environments that support academic achievement but then goes on to measure school usage with a yardstick that is not aligned with the standards set by the Contracts for Excellence.

I urge the members of this committee to consider sponsoring legislation that will compel all reporting of class size to use the Contracts for Excellence standards to make assessments.

I further urge the Council as a whole to use its influence to advocate for the alignment of the union contract with the class size standards in the Contracts for Excellence – nothing else makes sense. The way class size standards are determined for our students should be based on proven methodologies that support learning, rather than diminish it. Our children deserve our best selves.

Testimony prepared for February 28, 2020 New York City Council Education Committee Oversight Hearing on Class Size.

Sarah Morgridge

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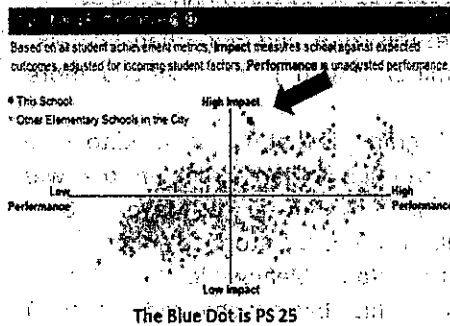


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Testimony before the NYC Council Education Committee on the Need to Reduce Class Size in the NYC Public Schools

February 28, 2020

Thank you Chair Treyger and the members of the Education Committee for holding these important hearings today, on a subject that is so central to the concerns of parents, teachers and students. My name is Leonie Haimson, and I'm the Executive Director of Class Size Matters



In February 2018, the Panel for Educational Policy approved the closure of PS 25, a small school in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. Parents sued and got a preliminary injunction against the school's closure. The next year, in 2019, at the court hearing on the lawsuit, the DOE withdrew the proposal, and said they would keep the school open for another year.

How is this relevant to these hearings on class size? The DOE had proposed closing the school, despite the fact that according to the school performance dashboard, PS 25 was the fourth best out of 661 public elementary schools in NYC

and the second best in Brooklyn, in terms of its positive impact on learning, while controlling for student background. It also outperformed every charter school citywide but one.¹

According to the DOE's own statistics, PS 25 surpassed the city average in test scores, while having a very high needs student population, including 100% students in poverty, 31% with disabilities, and 22% homeless.

The school outperformed other schools with similar students by 21 percentage points in ELA and Math, while its special needs students outperformed similar students by 47 percentage points in ELA. It also scored very high in all the other standards DOE uses to evaluate schools, including effective school leadership, trust, and collaborative teachers. Because of its stellar performance, the school was named a "Reward school" in 2018 by the New York State Education Department.²

Why was the school so successful? By all accounts, PS 25 teachers and the principal are excellent, and the class sizes are very small: only 10-18 students per class, far below the city averages. In fact, the

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/05/24/why-is-new-york-city-trying-to-close-a-successful-public-high-needs-school/>

² <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2018/commissioner-identifies-155-high-achieving-and-high-progress-schools-reward-schools>

school provides something of a “natural experiment” in class size, showing what might be accomplished if the DOE decided that class size reduction was a priority.

Sadly, it is not. In the CFE case, the state’s Court of Appeals concluded in 2003 that class sizes were too large in NYC schools to provide our students with their constitutional right to a sound basic education, writing that “[T]ens of thousands of students are placed in overcrowded classrooms... The number of children in these straits is large enough to represent a systemic failure.”³

Despite this decision, and the fact that when Bill de Blasio campaigned to be Mayor, he promised that he would lower class sizes in all grades to far lower levels, class sizes have stagnated and remain 15-30 percent on average larger than in the rest of the state.⁴ In the early grades, they are substantially larger (by 10 percent) than in 2003 when the CFE decision was issued. [See the charts in the appendix showing trend in class size over time.]

Class size averages, which range from 24 to 27 according to different grade ranges, don’t tell the whole story. This fall, there were at least 325,430 students in classes of 30 or more this year. The number of students in classes of 25 or more in Kindergarten has increased 68 percent since 2007, and the number of children in grades 1st through 3rd in classes of 30 or more has increased by nearly 3,000 percent. Nearly half of all middle school students (44 percent) are in classes this large, and more than half (56 percent) of all high school students have at least one core academic class with thirty students or more.⁵

Part of the reason class sizes have increased so sharply in the early grades is that the city used to adhere to “a side agreement” to limit class sizes to 28 or less in grades 1st through 3rd; an agreement that was first made in 1986, when Peter Vallone was City Council Speaker and Rudy Giuliani was Mayor, and funded through a special program pushed through by the Council.⁶ Yet the DOE stopped adhering to this agreement in 2010, which caused class sizes in those grades to explode. Meanwhile, the UFT class size limits in these grades remains at 32 students—a contractual cap which has not changed in over 50 years.

The research on the benefits of smaller classes is crystal clear, especially for children in the early grades. Project STAR, a large-scale experiment carried out in Tennessee in the 1980’s, showed that those students who were randomly placed in smaller classes in K-3 did better in every single way that could be measured. They received better grades, better test scores, and were less likely to be held back and less likely to exhibit disciplinary problems.⁷

³ Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc., et al. v. State of New York, et al., 100 N.Y.2d 893, 911-12 (2003) (“CFE II”)

⁴ De Blasio’s promises to lower class sizes are memorialized in two surveys he completed in 2013, one of which he personally signed at a candidate forum at Murry Bergtraum HS. See <https://nyckidspac.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/NYC-Kids-PAC-Questionnaire-Bill-de-Blasio.pdf> and <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Bill-deBlasio.pdf> Comparative class sizes of the state vs the city for 2016-2017 (the latest available) are posted here: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pmf/documents/LocalStats2017_WithOutCharters.xls

⁵ We counted only MS and HS students in social studies classes of 30 or more in order not to double count students. See more data in the Appendix and at <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/citywide-class-size-2.25.21-updated.pptx>

⁶ See the archived UFT page from 2011 here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110416005653/http://www.uft.org/faqs/what-are-class-size-limits-my-grade>

⁷ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED540485.pdf> ; more research can be found here: <https://www.classsizematters.org/research-and-links/#opportunity>

When they reached high school, they were more likely to graduate on time, be headed to college, and graduate with a STEM degree and own their own home more than twenty years later.⁸

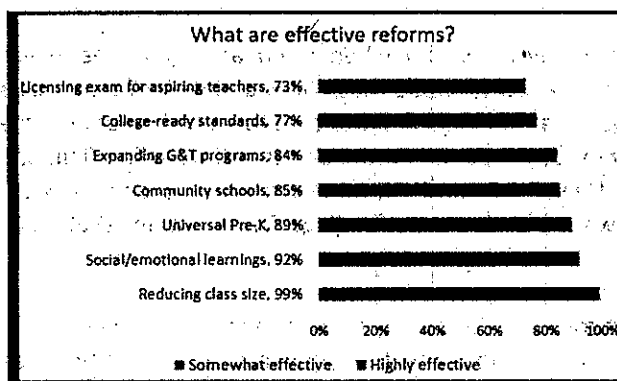
Though no large-scale experiment of a similar kind has been done on class sizes in the middle and upper grades, there are many studies which show a strong correlation between smaller classes in these grades and students' receiving better test scores, displaying improved non-cognitive skills such as persistence, and having higher graduation rates as well, while controlling for other observable factors.⁹

Most importantly, all the gains made as a result of smaller classes have been shown to be twice as large for disadvantaged students and students of color, who make up the majority of kids in the NYC public schools. That is why class size reduction is one of only a handful of reforms proven to narrow the achievement or opportunity gap.

Since Mayor de Blasio took office, achievement levels have been flat or declining, as measured on the national exams called the NAEPs, the most reliable assessments. And the gap in test scores between students of different economic and racial groups has widened.¹⁰

None of this is particularly surprising. In smaller classes, all students, but especially those who are struggling, have their academic and social-emotional needs better met, are able to receive more feedback from their teachers, feel like their teachers care about them more, and this motivates them to show effort and stay on track in their school work.

It is the personal, human connection that inspires them to learn. One of the saddest things is that many teachers say they don't have time to answer all their students' questions because the classes are too large.



UFT teacher survey, 2014

Instead, a common refrain I hear from parents is that their children report that their teachers tell them to ask at least two other students first before asking them a question. As a result, too many students become confused and lose interest, become passively disengaged, or act out in order to obtain the attention they crave.

This is why most NYC teachers say that class size reduction would be the best way to improve our schools; and why NYC parents put smaller classes among their top two priorities each year since the DOE surveys have been given.¹¹ Principals

⁸ https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Dynarski_et_al-2013-Journal_of_Policy_Analysis_and_Management-1.pdf and <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Chetty-et-al-2011.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.classsizematters.org/research-and-links/#benefits%20for%20the%20upper%20grades>

¹⁰ <https://chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/04/10/yet-again-new-york-city-shows-no-gains-on-a-national-reading-and-math-exam/>

¹¹ <http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/annual-teacher-survey-2014.pdf>

agree; in a survey we sponsored along with Emily Horowitz, a Sociology professor at St. Francis College, principals responded that to be able to provide a quality education, class sizes should be no more than 20 in grades K-3, 23 in grades 4-5, and 24 in all other grades.¹²

And yet to this day, the Mayor has completely ignored the need to lower class size, even when it comes to our most struggling schools. Though DOE officials promised the state to focus their class size efforts in the Renewal schools, we found that in nearly half (or 42 percent) of these schools, there was no reduction in average class size from November 2014 to November 2017; and in 73 percent, maximum class sizes continued to be at 30 or more.¹³

Renewal schools that did provide smaller classes, however, were significantly more likely to show success, as measured by their impact scores on the DOE School Performance dashboard, which controls for student need and background.

Table 1- Correlation Between Renewal Schools' Average Class Sizes and School Impact

Class Size Data	N	Pearson Correlation (R Value)	P Value
November 2016 Class Size	85	-0.326**	0.002
February 2017 Class Size	85	-0.314**	0.003

**** Correlation is Significant at the .01 Level (1-tailed)**

Chancellor Carranza is the first DOE Chancellor in many years who, when asked, admits that he realizes how important class size is and that as a teacher, he knew he could reach his students better in a class of 24 than 30. And yet when questioned by the Council at hearings or parents at town hall meetings what he intends to do about it, his response is almost exactly the same as the one that Chancellor Klein or Walcott used to give when asked this question: He will wait until the state provides more foundation aid and then he will let principals do what they want with the extra funding. This is not an acceptable response. Why?

First of all, NYC students should not have to wait for the state to fully fund foundation aid, when hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent by DOE on less effective, proven programs— including a substantial increase in bureaucracy and more standardized testing – and the city continues to enjoy a surplus. Secondly, the “Fair Student Funding” system, into which the additional Foundation Aid would flow, is designed to incentivize principals to keep class sizes as large as possible –because school funding is tied to the number of students they enroll. Lastly, class size reduction won’t happen in any systematic and rational fashion unless the DOE has a plan to make it happen, by providing the staff and the space where it’s most needed, as they did when they expanded pre-K.

And <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports-and-policies/school-quality/nyc-school-survey/survey-archives>

¹² This was the median response; the mean was 20, 22, and 25 depending on grade level; and the mode was 20 and 25. See https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/principal_survey_report_10.08_final1.pdf

¹³ <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Renewal-Schools-Testimony-Final-2.27.18.pdf>

That's why we are calling for the City Council to provide \$100 million in next year's budget to be allocated specifically towards class size reduction, starting first in the early grades and in struggling schools. This amount represents less than .3 percent of the DOE total budget of \$34 billion. This would represent the first step in a longer process of providing NYC children with the equitable and excellent education they deserve, and which parents, educators and researchers have known for decades are badly needed in our schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

**The New York City Council
Committee on Education**

Friday, February 28, 2020 10:00 A.M. City Hall, Committee Room
Oversight – Class Size Reduction

**Testimony of Karen Sprowal
What large classes have done to my special son**

February 28, 2020

Good morning, my name is Karen Sprowal I am the mother of one school age child son with special needs and two adult daughters. Together, we have attended NYC public schools in every decade since the 1960's. But it was not until 2007 when my youngest child entered Kindergarten that I became deeply involved with public education advocacy.

I am also here to provide testimony on behalf NYC Kids PAC, a political action committee that includes parent leaders from all five boroughs that informs the electorate and supports candidates for office who have demonstrated a commitment to improving our public schools.

We know from countless research studies that lowering class sizes leads to enormous health and economic benefits, as well as substantial savings, and most importantly, enhances the chance of successful academic outcomes for all students, especially disadvantaged ones and kids of color.

When my son entered kindergarten in 2007, he was first enrolled in a charter school that soon pushed him out, saying they could not provide him with the smaller class size he needed. In the public school that he transferred to, he was fortunate enough to be in a classroom of only twenty students. His class sizes remained between eighteen and twenty-three through third grade. Despite the difficult learning challenges he faced daily with ADHD, he thrived during those years, in both general and inclusion class settings. At one point he was well above grade level, and his teachers suggested that we consider applying him to the gifted program.

But when he entered fourth grade, his class size increased to twenty-nine students, and it was apparent very early on that he could not learn in a classroom with that many students. We watched in horror as my son unraveled and became emotionally unhinged whenever he was in school.

His teacher did not even realize that he could read or write, because he only participated in class when in a small group. . By mid- year, he required an arsenal of mandated clinical, behavior and academic support services that included a para-professional to shadow him everywhere.

His IEP para services were poorly managed and the DOE provided no real oversight. He had meltdowns daily in class, his attendance suffered, he was subjected to frequent suspensions. As his mental health continued to decline he had to be hospitalized several times.

Needless to say, the DOE's refusal to lower class size has been devastating for my son and hundreds of thousands of other students. After two more of years of this, we concluded that the DOE could not adequately or humanely educate my son.

He is now in a private school where his class sizes are small, his teachers are well trained and supported, and he is happy, learning; and preparing for admission to college. And his tuition at over \$90,000 per year is being paid for by the DOE .

Even as class size reduction may be costly, I would like the DOE and our elected officials to think about the costs of NOT lowering class size. One of the fastest growing expenses in the city's education budget is paying for private schools for children with special needs. Over the last four years, there has been a 13 percent increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolled in private

schools at DOE expense. More and more parents have been suing to get their children out of the public schools, and the cost has nearly doubled to more than \$325 million.³

At the same time, the number of public school students diagnosed as having special needs has increased by 9 percent to more than 224,000 students, at a cost of over \$2 billion annually. Yet nearly a quarter of students with disabilities do not receive all their mandated services.⁴ I am convinced that fewer children would be diagnosed with special needs in the first place if class sizes were smaller.

Since the 2008-2009 school year, there has also been a threefold increase in the number of elementary grade students enrolled in inclusion classes, in which children with disabilities are placed in classes with general education students and two teachers. Inclusion is a great policy; yet for my son and many others, their class sizes are often too large to provide the sustained feedback and quiet climate they need, and many parents like we were soon become desperate to move their children out into a smaller, self-contained classroom or a private placement.

I would like to suggest to the DOE and the City Council the following: that the city allocate at least \$100 million to lower class size, which will likely save millions more on special education costs, both in terms of the cost of service providers and for private school placements.

Secondly, someone needs to analyze whether the large class sizes of many of these inclusion classes are really working for our children, and whether it wouldn't be far better to split these classes in half. Can you imagine if instead of two teachers in a class of 28 or 30, the DOE divided that up into two classes of 14 or 15? This would be ideal for so many students who otherwise suffer, get left out or act out in these large classes. I strongly believe that both our special education and our general education students would have their academic and social-emotional needs better addressed in small classes, they would be far more successful, and the city would save money in the end.

³ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2019/01/07/private-school-tuition-reimbursement/>

⁴ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2019/07/09/nyc-vows-to-address-special-education-failures-detailed-in-state-review-but-will-their-reforms-go-far-enough/>

Dear Council,

My name is Tiesha Groover and I'm a parent of a student in District 75. I'm also the PA President and a member on the Citywide Council for District 75. However, today I wanted to speak not as a Council member on the Council that serves our families with students with multi-disabilities/abilities but as myself. As I care about ALL children and ALL the needs of the students in NYC?

Earlier today a District 75 parent shared her story / experience and asked me to share it.

Her son is now in our D75 school in Brooklyn. However he first attended a ICT class with 27 children. He needed a para but the school did not have the funds to provide such. Her son is in kindergarten and for months she stayed at that school daily very concerned for his safety. Now he is with us in a 8:1:1 with a para AND excited to attend school everyday!

Turn over

The whole "it takes a village to raise a family" needs to be really taken seriously as mental health and well being matters for all.

My backstory, My 6th grade teacher told my mother in 1996 that I would benefit from a small classroom. As a result ~~I~~ attended a school in the 7th grade with no more than 10 students and thrived! I now understand it was a pilot but it had the most positive impact ~~on~~ on me in so many ways.

Please continue the fight to
reduce class size in NYC

Tiesha Groover

Cell
(646) 221-7732

~~Brooklyn, NY~~
Brooklyn, NY.

Brooklyn, Rep on Citywide
Council for D75

Good morning. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Daniel Katz. I am a lifelong educator who has been teaching since I started my career as a high school ELA teacher in 1993. Currently, I am a teacher educator and Chair of the Department of Educational Studies at Seton Hall University. More importantly, I am the father of two children who attend a New York City public school, PS 334 in Manhattan. Additionally, I am a former member of the Community Education Council for District 3. It is my pleasure to speak today in support of class size reductions as one of the most robust ways to support our city's students.

Although I have agreed to speak as an academic in the field of education, I'd like to begin by relating two very different experiences that I have witnessed as both a parent and as a CEC3 member. As I mentioned, my children attend PS 334 in Manhattan which is one of the schools in the city that is fortunate enough to have the capacity to engage in aggressive fund raising. We can rightly question why it is that parental resources have such an impact on students' educational opportunities in a city with so much wealth, but we can also look at how raised funds are used. In the case of PS 334, those funds contribute to teaching assistants in the early grade classrooms. As a result, during their crucial early education years, my children enjoyed classroom conditions that all children in our city deserve.

This stands in stark contrast to situations I witnessed as a member of CEC3. At PS 208 in Harlem, we heard pleas from families about a situation where an entire grade enrolled just fewer than 40 students who were all crammed into a single classroom. Parents were pleading for an answer and explaining how detrimental the situation was for their children. Our superintendent repeatedly said the situation was the result of the principal's budgeting choices and could not explain how district administration could allow it to persist. What was left unacknowledged was the cold calculation that it was "better" to harm an entire grade of children whose parents did not have deep fund raising potential than it was to pay to staff two classrooms that would have been well below the maximum class cap but still large enough to be viable classrooms.

This is a situation that plays out daily in the lives of our children. In the few schools that can use copious fund raising to supplement their budgets, young

children enjoy smaller effective class sizes while many, many, other schools' students and teachers struggle with class sizes that impede effective classroom communities and that hinder instruction and services.

Research studies over time are clear on the matter: class size reduction is an effective way to improve school outcomes. It increases student learning. It decreases disciplinary referrals. It increases teacher retention. As a school improvement strategy, it is highly popular with both teachers and parents in surveys. In September 2014, 73 education scholars submitted a letter to the DOE urging action to reduce class sizes as part of any school improvement plan and warning that failure to do so could undermine other efforts.

And yet, class sizes in New York City remain stubbornly high. We exceed class size averages for the state in every grade level. All grade levels have increased average class size since 2007, and a quarter of our students are in classes that exceed 30 students. It is very probable that laudable efforts to reform our schools were hindered by class sizes that made proper support for students and teachers much more difficult than was necessary.

You have an opportunity to act in support of the reform that was passed over in 2014. A relatively small commitment in funding would leave room for other innovations while adding enough new teachers to reduce class sizes in 1000s of classrooms. It is up to you to think comprehensively. Thank you for your attention.

School to Prison Pipeline through Classrooms

Testimony before the NYC Council Education Committee

By Curtis D. Young

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Curtis Young, member of Community Board 12 Youth and Education Committee and Executive Director of a juvenile justice nonprofit. I am speaking today on behalf of the youth my organization serves. Youth who are incarcerated in prisons, juvenile detention centers, or who are otherwise involved in the juvenile justice system.

One thing I have noticed through my work, is that students with learning challenges, behavioral issues, ADHD, history of trauma, anxiety among others are often the students I meet in my line of work. These are the students who have been left behind in classrooms and end up involved in the justice system. Because of this recurrence I began to pose questions to the youth my organizations serves about their own experience in classrooms and that's when I realize that the School to Prison pipeline begins at the classroom level.

Imagine a third grade student, let's call him Michael.

- Michael is a young black student in the classroom with 30 students. Michael has challenges focusing in the classroom and really requires a lot of attention that unfortunately his teacher can't give him. As a byproduct of his need for attention he begins to "act out" in the classroom. Due to large class size, the teacher isn't able to manage his behavior and sends him out of the classroom. Michael is reprimanded and ends up missing critical content in class. Michael eventually returns to class but now is faced with the challenge of catching up and the teacher simply can't help with that, as they are focusing on the other 29 students. Michael's behavioral issues continue and become a recurring problem the teacher faces. He's eventually suspended from school. Years later, Michael drops out of our school.

Let's be clear about the following facts:

Large classes packed with students provide more opportunities for personality conflicts, tension, and general disruptive behavior. Teachers with years of experience, certifications and degrees still find it difficult to manage an overcrowded classroom successfully and can find themselves spending more time [managing their classroom](#) than they do teaching. In these cases, the easy solution is to send students with personality conflicts, tension, and behavioral out of the classroom or suspend them from school.

This is proof that we must invest in a class size reduction plan for all of our schools while specifically being attentive to those who are already high at-risk in our underserved communities. What we know for sure is the following:

- 1. Class size reduction improves test scores for Black male students and significantly narrows the achievement gap.**
- 2. Class size reduction leads to increases in college entrance and other postsecondary outcomes for Black male students.**
- 3. Class-size reduction has non-cognitive and disciplinary impacts that are likely to benefit Black males.**

At very young ages, young black boys and girls are at risk of entering the school to prison pipeline and without their knowledge. Imagine a world where those students are receiving the attention and socio-emotional learning support inside and out the classroom that they need. This is why class size matters and this is why we need your support.

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Testimony
To the New York City Council Hearing on Class Size
Fri. Feb. 28, 2020
10 am

by Jessica Siegel

My name is Jessica Siegel. I recently retired as Associate Professor of Education, English ~~&~~ Journalism at Brooklyn College/CUNY after 18 years. Prior to that I taught English and journalism for 12 years at three New York City high schools. A large percentage of my work life has been committed to education, here in New York City, either as a teacher, a professor, (a teacher of teachers) or as a journalist writing about urban education.

I taught high school at three different schools: Seward Park High School on the Lower East Side, with a student population of over 3,500, Abraham Lincoln High School in Coney Island, which educates 1,750 students and the Heritage School in East Harlem, which serves 300 students. For decades, there was been a push for smaller schools, the idea being that teachers will be able to get to know their students well and in that way really improve teaching and learning.

And yet I can tell you from teaching at schools which ranged in size from 300 to 3,500, that the most important factor in student engagement and achievement is not school size but class size. Let me repeat that again: class size. Why should that be surprising? One of the first things that elite parents who can afford private schools look for in a school is teacher-student ratios. And obviously, this is even more important for the children who attend public schools who may speak another language at home, have parents who work two or three jobs or are homeless or are living in unstable situations.

At Brooklyn College, I taught pre-service and working middle school and high school English teachers how to teach writing in their classes. The reality is that there are few teachers with a wider range of responsibilities than those who teach English: from helping their students develop a love of reading, an array of critical reasoning skills, a sense of self-awareness and a knowledge of the larger world. They are also tasked to give their students an exposure to both the classics and modern multicultural literature, an understanding of literary genres and an appreciation of and excitement about literature and reading. But however long the list, it always ends with the exceedingly important responsibility of teaching their students to write. Despite talk among many about the need for writing across the curriculum--that all subject matters should integrate the teaching of writing--it is still the English teacher who is mostly responsible for the teaching of writing, for getting his/her students engaged with writing, enabling them to make writing work for them and commandeer its power.

It's my opinion after working in education for over 30 years that it is facility in writing and being able to write in a variety of forms, styles and purposes that is an important factor in determining whether a student can succeed in college and in a career after that. Every career requires writing of some sort and an ability to write is crucial in enabling students to transform their lives and to bridge the class chasm.

Yet according to the stats that Class Size Matters has collected, over 159,000 high school students are in English classes with more than 30 students. That is 47 percent of all high school students. Fifty-five percent of students in social studies classes, the other class where students do concentrated writing, are in classes of 30 or more.

Let's look at some more numbers: if an English teacher has 5 classes of 34 students a day, she is responsible for 170 students. (34 is the class size cap negotiated with the union 50 years ago.) All of us who are writers know that all writing is revising and that students really learn to write through revising their work. In fact, this is something you want to teach your students to do instinctively. You want your students to revise? Those 170 papers times are now multiplied by two or three. And during a semester, if students have three or four major assignments (and homework and smaller assignments), how many papers are their English teachers responsible for?

Over the last week or so, I emailed some of my former students who are now teaching to ask about how many students they currently teach and what it is like teaching them writing. One wonderful committed teacher who teaches at a junior high school in the Bronx said:

"My largest 8th grade class is a whopping 37 students. I teach two more classes, one with 32 and the last one with 28. Both include English Language Learners and students who require push in services for their Individualized Education Plans.

"The need for feedback for writing and reading intervention is very high. . . I tried to meet with students to assist them in their revisions. Not only was I just able to leave brief and hurried feedback on the original paper which took me over two weeks to read, but I could only devote about a minute or two to each student to explain how to implement the feedback. Even then it took days to get to each student. . . .

"I feel as though I'm being torn to shreds when I'm helping others, their eyes hungry and ready and yet there you are unable to reach them. It's as if you have one life raft and must choose which child gets saved. It's heart wrenching and demoralizing."

But more than that, at CUNY, where six out of 10 New York City public school students who go to college attend, 52 percent of community college students and 42

Edwidge Danticat, the Haitian-American writer, grew up in Flatbush, went to public schools, then to Barnard and Brown and on to being one of the most respected writers of her generation.

“Create dangerously, for people who read dangerously. This is what I always thought it meant to be a writer. Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your works may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them.... Somewhere, if not now, then maybe years in the future, we may also save someone’s life (or mind) because they have given us a passport, making us honorary citizens of their culture.”

February 28, 2020

Regent Kathleen Cashin Testimony to the City Council Education Committee on the importance of reducing class size

Thank you Chair Treyger and the members of the NYC Council Education Committee for holding these important hearings today.

In 1999, when I was Superintendent of District 23, Ocean Hill Brownsville, the fourth graders had to take a multi-faceted state test for the first time, which included reading, writing and listening.

The first thing I did was to reduce class size in that grade.

In those days, the community superintendents had their own budgets and therefore I could invest the necessary funds to provide reasonable class sizes so we could better prepare students to take this important new state test. We lowered class size in all the fourth grade classes to 16 to 20 students per class.

We also helped prepare the teachers by providing them with books in different genres and had them ask their students respond to writing prompts each morning, following reading and listening exercises.

The results were astounding. The children in one of the poorest districts in the nation had the greatest growth of any district in the city in reading, writing and listening. The key initiative that caused this substantial growth, I believe, was lowering their class size.

I also noticed that a more manageable class size promoted collaborative planning among the teachers. This is essential because collaboration improves instruction and collegiality among the staff.

I discovered that class size not only improves the ability of students to learn but also improves the ability of teachers to plan and teach in a more effective manner.

For the first time, they were able to manage their classes better, in that the smaller classes allowed them to develop a relationship of trust with their students, that in turn led to improvements in student discipline and behavior.

Teachers had more energy and confidence in their ability to do their job, which encouraged them to more enthusiastically collaborate with each other. This fostered a higher degree of professionalism.

My experience as District Superintendent reinforced my conviction in the importance of class size and my understanding of the following principle: If you reduce class size, and provide the right curriculum and structure, the rest will follow.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The Impact of Class Size on Learning

Rosalie Friend, Ph.D.

February 28, 2020

As a retired educational psychologist, I recommend that class size be reduced in order to enhance student learning. Most people feel that it is self evident that a teacher can give more attention to each child when there are fewer children to work with. Research supports that no factor affects student achievement as much as class size.

The best research model for learning and instruction is an experiment with comparison of a control group to an experimental group with random assignment of subjects, so that achievement can be directly attributed to the factor that varies between the groups. A further requirement is a large enough number of participants, so that the results cannot be due to chance. These research conditions are difficult to meet when conducting research in schools. The one study on class size that met these conditions was the Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio experiment, or Project STAR, which was conducted in Tennessee during the late 1980s (1). This four year study included 11,600 students attending eighty schools. It found that a large reduction in class size significantly improved the learning of the children in the small classes compared to similar children randomly assigned to large classes. The estimated effects of class size were largest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, inner-city students, and boys.

Research in how students learn shed light on an important reason that small classes enhance learning. Our goal as educators is not to produce obedient drones to do what they are told on the factory floor. We want our children to analyze information and situations. We want problem solvers. Everyone knows that telling things to children does not do much for learning. Children have to be actively involved in the learning process in order to connect new ideas and procedures to prior knowledge, so that the new material can be drawn on in new situations and used to solve new problems. We must teach children to read between the lines, figure things out, and remember what they learned in one situation when it will be useful in another situation. For this type of learning to occur the children must actively try out new ideas, discuss things with one another, and work on projects together. Classes must be small enough so teachers can work with small groups of students and can have time to analyze original writing and in depth assignments from every child.

Reducing class size is an investment, not an expense.

(1) Krueger, A.B. (1999). Experimental estimates of education production functions. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115, 497–532.

Rosalie Friend, Ph.D.
440 Fifth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Testimony of Prof. Jacqueline Shannon before the NYC Council Education oversight hearings on class size

February 28, 2020

Thank you, Chair Treyger for holding these important hearings today. My name is Jacqueline Shannon and I am an Associate Professor and the Department Chair of Early Childhood and Art Education at Brooklyn College.

In 2014, I helped write a letter to then-Chancellor Farina, warning her that the increases in class size that had occurred since 2007 in NYC public schools, particularly in the early grades of K-3, threatened to undermine the gains one might otherwise expect from the expansion of prekindergarten across the city.

This letter, which is attached to my testimony, was signed by over 70 professors of education, psychology, and sociology.¹ Sadly, we received no response from the Chancellor.

Since we sent this letter more than five years ago, the city has made very little progress in lowering class sizes, which are still far larger than they were in 2007, especially in the early grades.

Kindergarten through 3rd grade are those very years where the research is most crystal clear and convincing that class size has a strong determining effect on learning, especially for disadvantaged children and students of color. And yet the number of children in Kindergarten in classes of 25 or more has risen by 68% since 2007, and the number of 1st through 3rd graders of thirty or more has increased by nearly 3000%.²

Luckily, class sizes are strictly limited by state law for preK; but none when they enter Kindergarten.³ The only limits on class size are the UFT contractual limits, which are far too large, and only inconsistently enforced.⁴

One of the best experimental studies of preK recently concluded in Tennessee. Researchers from Vanderbilt University followed a thousand randomly selected, economically disadvantaged students from pre-K through third grade, and compared them to a control group who did not attend Pre-K. Not only did students who missed pre-K catch up within a year or two, but the students who attended pre-K had fallen behind their peers on many achievement measures by the third grade.⁵

¹ <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Letter-Reducing-Class-size-to-Farina.pdf> See also the oped here: Jacqueline Shannon and Mark Lauterbach: *Mayor De Blasio Must Put Reducing Class Sizes at Top of His Agenda.* SchoolBook, Nov. 6, 2014; <https://www.wnyc.org/story/opinion-de-blasio-must-put-reducing-class-size-first/>

² See the data summarized at <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/citywide-class-size-updated-2.17.20.pptx>

³ The maximum legal size of preK classes in NY State is 20. In classes with 18 students or less, one teacher and one paraprofessional are required; for 19 or 20 students, there must be one teacher and two paraprofessionals assigned to each class. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/documents/151-1.pdf>

⁴ The UFT class size limits are: 25 students per class in Kindergarten, 32 in elementary grades, 33 in middle schools (30 in Title 1 middle schools), and 34 in high schools. See <https://www.uft.org/teaching/new-teachers/your-rights-new-members/class-size>

⁵ Mark W. Lipsey, Dale C. Farran, Kerry G. Hofer, "A Randomized Control Trial of a Statewide Voluntary Prekindergarten Program on Children's Skills and Behaviors through Third Grade," Peabody Research Institute of Vanderbilt University, 2015. https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pri/VPKthrough3rd_final_withcover.pdf

The lead researchers of this Vanderbilt study were surprised. They have speculated about why the program failed to produce positive results. As co-investigator Dale Farran concluded:

Pre-K is a good start, but without a more coherent vision and consistent implementation of that vision, we cannot realistically expect dramatic effects...Too much has been promised from one year of preschool intervention without the attention needed to the quality of experiences children have and what happens to them in K-12."

The other co-investigator, Mark Lipsey, pointed out that the study raises important questions about what was happening in the other early grades to cause these students to fall behind:

"The biggest mystery here is what in the world is going on as these kids hit kindergarten, first, second, third grade, that is not building on what they seem to have come out of pre-K with?"⁶

There is no mystery as to what hits NYC children as they enter Kindergarten in our public schools. As we wrote in our letter to the Chancellor, in words that still hold true today:

New York City schools have the largest classes in the state and among the largest in the nation. We believe strongly that more equitable outcomes depend on more equity in opportunity. We commend you for your commitment to expanding prekindergarten programs, but as you know, early childhood education does not begin and end at age 4. We urge you now to focus on lowering class sizes in all grades, which will improve teaching and learning in our public schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

September 22, 2014

Cc: Mayor de Blasio

Dear Chancellor Fariña:

We, the undersigned, professors and researchers, urge you to put forward an aggressive but practicable plan to reduce class size in NYC public schools. Last school year, class sizes were the largest in 15 years in grades K-3, and the largest since 2002 in grades 4-8. More than 330,000 children were sitting in classes of 30 or more, according to DOE data.

As you know, robust research shows that class size matters for all students, but particularly students at-risk of low achievement, including children of-color, those in poverty, English language learners, and students with special needs. This is why class size reduction has been shown to be one of the few reforms to narrow the achievement gap.

Smaller classes have also been shown to increase student engagement, lower disciplinary referral and drop-out rates, and reduce teacher attrition. No teacher, no matter how skilled or well prepared, can be as effective in the large classes that exist in many of our city's public schools.

We believe that the benefits of many of the other positive reforms that the city is pursuing, such as increasing access to Universal prekindergarten, establishing community schools, and inclusion for students with disabilities, may be undermined unless the trend of growing class sizes is reversed and class sizes are lowered in the city's public schools.

In particular, placing students with special needs into classes of 25, 30 or more will not work to serve their individual needs, no less the needs of the other students in the class.

⁶ Blake Farmer, "Vanderbilt's Unflattering Pre-K Study Strikes A Nerve, But What Does It Really Say?" Nashville Public Radio, September 28, 2015. <http://nashvillepublicradio.org/post/vanderbilt-s-unflattering-pre-k-study-strikes-nerve-what-does-it-really-say#stream/0>

New York City schools have the largest classes in the state and among the largest in the nation. We believe strongly that more equitable outcomes depend on more equity in opportunity. We commend you for your commitment to expanding prekindergarten programs, but as you know, early childhood education does not begin and end at age 4.

We urge you now to focus on lowering class sizes in all grades, which will improve teaching and learning in our public schools.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline D. Shannon, Chair, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College

Diane Ravitch, Research Professor of Education, New York University

Barbara Schwartz, Clinical Professor, Dept. of Teaching and Learning, NYU Steinhart

Sonia Murrow, Associate Professor, Brooklyn College

Mark Alter, Professor of Educational Psychology, Programs in Special Education, New York University

Xia Li, Assistant Professor, Undergraduate Deputy, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College

Barbara Rosenfeld, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Childhood, Bilingual, and Special Education, Brooklyn College

Sharon O'Connor-Petruso, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Childhood, Bilingual, and Special Education, Brooklyn College

Carol Korn-Burztyn, Ph.D., Professor, Dept. of School Psychology, Counseling, and Leadership, Brooklyn College & Ph.D. Program in Urban Education, Graduate Center, CUNY

Karen Zumwalt, Evenden Professor Emerita of Education, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University

Beverly Falk, Ed.D., Professor/Director, Graduate Programs in Early Childhood Education, The School of Education, City University of NY

David Bloomfield, Professor of Educational Leadership, Law and Policy, Brooklyn College & CUNY Graduate Center

Jessica Siegel, Assistant Professor, Education, English and Journalism, Brooklyn College

Barbara Winslow, Professor, Secondary Education, Brooklyn College

Diana B. Turk, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director, Social Studies Education, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, New York University

Peter Taubman, Professor Secondary Education, Department of Secondary Education, Brooklyn College

James E. Corter, Prof. of Statistics and Education, Dept. of Human Development, Teachers College, Columbia University

Jeanne Angus, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Childhood, Bilingual & Special Education Head, Graduate Program in Special Education Co-Director, Brooklyn College

David Forbes, Associate Professor, Brooklyn College

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Anna Stetsenko, Ph.D., Professor, Ph.D. Program in Developmental Psychology, The Graduate Center of The City University of New York

Katharine Pace Miles, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College

Daniel S. Katz, Ph.D., Director, Secondary/Secondary Special Education, Seton Hall University

Nancy Leggio, Education Program Faculty, Kingsborough Community College

Tovah Klein, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Director, Barnard Center for Toddler Development, Barnard College, Columbia University

Rosalie Friend, Adjunct Associate Professor, Educational Foundations, Hunter College

Gigliana Melzi, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Dept. of Applied Psychology, New York University

Daisy Edmondson Alter, Ph.D, Center for Advanced Study in Education, CUNY Graduate Center

Jacqueline Hollander, Substitute Instructor, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College

Dr. Johnny Lops, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Marshall A. George, Ed.D., Professor and Chair, Graduate School of Education, Fordham University
Helen Freidus, Ed.D., Bank Street College of Education
Barbara Barnes, Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Education, Brooklyn College
Hugh F Cline, Adjunct Professor of Sociology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University
Gil Schmerler, Director, Leadership for Educational Change, Bank Street College
Elsie Cardona-Berardinelli, Resource Specialist, Fordham University
Lulu Song, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College
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Rena Rice, Graduate School Faculty, Bank Street College of Education
Mary Mueller, Ed.D., Seton Hall University
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Mary DeBey, Associate Professor, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College
Susan Riemer Sacks, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Director of Education Initiatives, Barnard College
Jeremy D. Finn, Ph.D., SUNY Distinguished Professor, Graduate School of Education, University of Buffalo-SUNY
Diane Howitt, Resource Specialist, NYS/NYC RB-ERN Fordham University, Graduate School of Education, Center for Educational Partnerships
Fran Blumberg, Associate Professor, Division of Psychological and Educational Services, Fordham University
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John Craven, Ph.D., Science Education, Fordham University
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Herman Jiesamfoek, Associate Professor, Associate Professor, Dept. of Early Childhood and Art Education, Brooklyn College
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Meral Kaya, Ph.D Assistant Professor, School of Education, Dept. of Childhood, Bilingual, Special Education, Brooklyn College
Laurie Rubel, Ph.D., Association Professor, Dept. of Secondary Education, Brooklyn College
Geraldine Faria, Assistant Dean, School of Education, Brooklyn College

FOR THE RECORD

Hello. My name is Kristal Aliyas. Since 2003, I have been an elementary school teacher w/ DOE. I started as a Teaching Fellow and have worked in self-contained, ELL, inclusion, and for the past 4 years in ICT classrooms. I am only able to attend today's hearing because I am taking a study sabbatical supported by the UFT to continue my professional development which in turn will benefit the students I serve when I return to the classroom in the fall.

For 15 years of my career, I have worked in early childhood grades. I'm expected to address their academic needs (including literacy & critical thinking) combined with social emotional development and life skills (tying shoes, separation anxiety, growing independence, & self-control), in addition to developing a positive sense of self.

Think ~~##~~ how class size impacts the child as each individual is developing a sense of self such as - interacting with others, speaking in front of a group, and anxiety level. . . all are influenced by. Large or small class size can influence a student's level of engagement and build a sense of community. I ask you to think about your personal educational experience and what it felt like to be in a big or small classroom.

With a smaller class size, educators can actually devote our time tailoring instruction to various learning styles of children in developmentally appropriate or interest groups versus exhaust our efforts to address external situations (recess, drama, number of distractions, volume, etc) that occur in a larger group.

FOR THE RECORD

When I enter a classroom with 25 students (versus my typical experience of 30+), I think that's one less table in the room, that decreases the stimulus = needs of the class; one less small group to plan appropriate activities for, and more time for educators to use their expertise to create meaningful experiences for their smaller group of learners.

Your consideration of the student and teachers in our educational students is greatly appreciated. I request your efforts to ensure smaller class sizes for all grades.

Thank you

Testimony Submitted by Shino Tanikawa, a public school parent in
Community School District 2

Hearing on Class Size

March 1, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on class size. I am a parent of two children, the younger of whom is still in public school. I am a member of the Community Education Council for District 2 (since 2009), have served on five different School Leadership Teams as a parent member, served as the Co-Chair of the Blue Book Working Group and currently serve as the Co-Chair of the Education Council Consortium. However I submit this testimony as a parent representing myself and my own children.

I am grateful that the Education Committee of the New York City Council considers class size important enough to have a hearing. As Chairman Treyger is aware, class size has always been very important to public school parents, as evidenced by a decade's worth of the NYC School Surveys in which parents consistently rank class size as the most important or the second most important improvement for their schools.

My experience as a parent and an educator

The smallest class size my children had through elementary, middle and high schools was 18 in Pre-Kindergarten and that was because that class size is a legal mandate. My older daughter was a beneficiary of the Early Grade Class Size Reduction funding and spent the Kindergarten and first grade years in a class of about 20 students. My younger one was not so lucky. That funding had disappeared by the time she started her elementary school and she was in a class of 22 and 23 in Kindergarten and first grade respectively. The rest of the grades for both my daughters were/have been in classes of 28 in elementary grades and more than 30 in middle and high school grades. My older daughter was in a gym class of 50 students. Not surprisingly she got away with sitting in the corner of the gym with her friends and not engage in any physical activities.

Luckily my daughters did not require a lot of attention from teachers. But I could not help feel they were short changed because their classes were so large and the wonderful teachers they had could not bring out the full potential of my children.

As an environmental educator, I rely on hands-on activities and field trips as an effective way to teach environmental concepts and nurture a sense of stewardship of the City's natural resources. I often work with public school teachers and have experienced first-hand the challenges of creating engaging activities or hosting a field trip for a class of 30+ students. I firmly believe our students miss out on educational opportunities when class sizes are large.

Class size is an issue *everyone* agrees on

These days we find ourselves divided on many education issues, such as standardized testing, homework policy, academic tracking, superintendency structure, etc. However, on

class size even the polar opposite groups tend to agree. In fact, very few people (perhaps with the exception of Michael Bloomberg) advocate for larger class sizes. In addition, even if the United Federation of Teachers and the central administration of the NYC Department of Education do not advocate for small class size, teachers and principals who are in classrooms every day do. I have yet to meet a teacher or a principal to whom small class size was unimportant.

Such unity on an educational issue is rare and presents an opportunity for bolder actions. I will share some of these actions further down in my testimony.

DOE's refusal to acknowledge importance of class size

I serve on the Fair Student Funding Task Force, which at various times discussed the impact of the FSF formula on class size. My impression from the discussions is that neither the City Hall nor the DOE acknowledges the connection between the FSF and class size or the fact that the Campaign for Fiscal Equity resulted in a Class Size Reduction Plan (albeit the plan has been abandoned by both the DOE and the NYS Education Department).

While reviewing and recommending changes to the weights in the FSF is an important endeavor, my impetus for serving on the FSF Task Force was to evaluate the impact of the formula on class size. It was quite disheartening to learn how little importance class size appears to be for this administration.

Perhaps I should have known better. When the Blue Book Working Group recommended that the DOE use class sizes from the Class Size Reduction Plan in the capacity formula, the DOE rejected the recommendation. Without the use of appropriate class size in the capacity formula, we have no way of knowing the true extent of overcrowding or how much more capacity we need to build.

Importance of class size in school integration

The DOE's lack of commitment to reducing class size is particularly concerning given the Chancellor's priority to integrate our schools. Having chaired the Community Education Council District 2 Diversity Committee and served on the School Diversity Advisory Group, I have heard from many parents who doubt the ability of our teachers to teach a wide range of students in the same class.

My daughters attended an elementary school that offered bridge classes, each class serving two grades. Teachers at this school were able to teach the full two-year span in age difference, addressing the needs of the youngest and the oldest students as well as the students in the middle. While I know good teachers can teach diverse learners, the fact remains, it is much harder when there are 30 third graders or 34 tenth graders in one class. Now with Cultural Responsive-Sustaining Education, which is a critical and necessary component of integration, teachers must have smaller classes so that they can build meaningful and authentic relationships with individual students.

If the DOE is seriously committed to school integration, it is imperative that the DOE prioritizes class size reduction at the same time. We cannot risk our integration efforts to fail because of class size. The two must go hand in hand.

Actions for the City Council

I would like to ask the City Council to:

- Allocate \$100 million in the FY2021 budget specifically for class size reduction;
- Pass a resolution urging the State legislature and the Governor to fund more than \$1 billion owed to our students in the Foundation Aid and amend the Contracts for Excellence law to require class size reduction;
- Require the DOE to submit a Class Size Reduction Plan by updating the timeline in the Class Size Reduction Plan of 2007 and submit a progress report against the benchmarks every year;
- Work with advocates to change the Blue Book capacity formula so that it is based on appropriate class sizes;
- Create a adequately resourced commission to evaluate the school based funding formula explicitly with respect to class size.

We know that there is not enough money to do everything we want. We know that the budget landscape this year is particularly grim. However, the fiscal environment should not dictate how we assess the current conditions in our schools. We need the Blue Book formulas to be accurate so that we know what the true capacity need is, regardless of how much funding is available. We want to know how many more teachers our schools need to hire, without sacrificing art, music, physical education, social emotional learning, etc., to bring class sizes to what they should be. In other words we really need to know how much more funding we need both in expense funding and capital funding to create a school system that has class sizes that are educationally sound.

I am committed to continuing my advocacy on class size. I hope the City Council will take bold steps to show its solidarity with parents and students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Submitted by:
Shino Tanikawa
118 Sullivan Street
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Testimony to the New York City Council for Class Size Reduction

My name is Lorraie Forbes and I am a senior at Clara Barton high school and a student leader at Teens Take Charge.

Smaller class sizes are extremely important not only for the student but also for the teachers. Being a student can only imagine how hard it must be for the teachers to have to balance the work so that it reaches every student level. I believe that more teachers should definitely be hired to reduce class sizes for more teacher-to-student interactions and more people who work at the same or similar pace in the same classes. Personally, I've been to three high schools and in each of them class size has been a huge problem. The first two were already campus schools so there were more than 3 schools in the building, space wasn't at all limited. Teachers were though. There would be 30-35 kids in each classroom. To the outside ear they might not think it's that much but to me? the student who literally has to sit in the gym and remind their teacher their name once again in February? The student who can't get a hold of their English teacher because there were about 20 kids who needed to speak to her before? The student who's probably failing history because the teacher can't have a 1-on-1 conversation to assist me in the work because the other 34 kids would have the class in shambles? The student who's a senior getting work at a 10th graders level because the students in their class can't write a paragraph? The student who wants to express her ideas and leave room for a little debate but whose voice isn't heard ideas are put away and shut down because "there's no time". And the student who has nobody to gravitate to when the teacher says it's group work time because they have no friends? That student is me.

I went to the same middle school as Tiffani right here. One floor was extremely small and to give the exact number of students it was 264 middle school kids. I now go to a high school with over 1000 students and it is overwhelming. I feel as if my fellow students and I are being robbed of the opportunity to be as big as we can be. I am a black woman and I'm from what many people call the Hood. Brownsville brooklyn I live in the projects. People have low expectations within the education system from people who have situations like mine. Imagine coming to school and not being able to achieve as much because of something many people overlook like class size. Schools like Beacon high school raise over half a million dollars a year, using these funds to pay for additional resources, such as staff. They can reduce their class sizes by relying on parents for fiscal support, but that's not the case for schools in my neighborhood. This really highlights bigger issues such as inequity and the limits of diversity.

Testimony to the New York City Council for Class Size Reduction

Good afternoon my name is Tiffani Torres, I am a senior at Pace HS and a student leader at Teens Take Charge.

My experience with class size has varied over the years. In my middle school, where there were less than 200 students, classes remained relatively small. There was always a teacher I could go to for help, administrators were accessible, and I didn't have to worry about asking questions and disrupting the lesson. High school, however, has been the opposite experience. Over the past 4 years, my class sizes have grown substantially, yet our space remains limited. My school building houses 3 different schools, mine now outnumbering the other 2, and my classes have grown from an average of 20 students to over 30. In the beginning of this school year, there were 35 students in my advanced placement calculus class. In a school where students typically underperform in STEM subjects, this has proved to be a difficult size to manage. Four students have dropped the class, no longer able to handle the rigor and unanswered questions. I find myself spacing out during the lessons, confused but scared of interrupting the lesson and distracting the now 31 other students in my class. Smaller classes allow for more in-depth discussion of topics at hand, things my teachers crave but never have the time to facilitate. They allow for greater individual attention per student and a more targeted learning experience. Students can ask specific questions and have time to receive answers, boosting our quality of education.

But we all know this already. This ties to a much larger issue, a systemic one. Discriminatory screens, both in middle schools and high schools, serve to concentrate students with the greatest needs in the same schools. Class size becomes a major issue, and when there are over 30 students in a room with a single teacher, all struggling yet unable to receive the attention they need, we begin to understand how black and latinx students are consistently left behind.

After 2 years of fighting the DOE and the mayor to address segregation and the other inequities in our system like class size, we at Teens Take Charge have a really simple message for Mayor De Blasio, Chancellor Carranza and the entire DOE: your time is up. We have begun preparing for a citywide school boycott. If the administration does not act fast and issue a comprehensive plan to address systemic segregation, THE YOUTH will take charge and make our voices heard in huge numbers by boycotting school on May 18. We thank Council Member Treyger for his continuous support of Teens Take Charge, and hope the rest of the council will support our demands for immediate action from the DOE.

My name is Alexa Aviles, I am the proud mother of a 11- and 14-year-old New York City public school students. I have served as the PTA President in a D-15 Brooklyn elementary school for almost ten years, and am now serving on School Leadership Team at a D-15 middle school. I'm Member of Brooklyn Community Board #7 and the Chair of the NYC Youth Board at the Department of Youth and Community Development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this hearing and for taking the time listen to the direct experiences of families in our public-school system today. Esteemed City Council Members, thank you for your work. I encourage your continued zealous advocacy in support of our children and **the proposal to allocate \$100 million to lower class size.**

Imagine, your child (or favorite person in the world) needed surgery. The day you showed up you were informed that there had been budget cuts (the agency has the money but decided to use it on something else). They tell you rather than use the latest evidenced-based techniques, they are going to use old procedures that are relatively unsuccessful. Imagine they tell you the surgeons will have one hand tied behind their back and they won't be able to see very well. They tell you that the operating room will up to 34 other patients.

How are you be feeling about the surgery and chances for success? I can tell you - I am NOT feeling good about this situation. I'm feeling a bit angry, actually. I'm wondering, why my child is not receiving the best care? Why are the doctors and administrators seemingly ok with conditions they know are bad? WHY?

This same dynamic is playing out here in the education system with our children. Reducing class sizes has been identified of one of **the top reforms** that can narrow the achievement and opportunity gap for all students, and especially our families of color. Research has shown – over and over again – smaller class sizes lead to better results: higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, less teacher turnover.

And yet, we seem to be ok with not following data and worsening conditions.

I have seen my own children struggle with the impacts crowded classrooms. I have also witnessed many teachers too overwhelmed by the large #s numbers and competing needs. In my City Council D38 – a vibrant, immigrant community in BK - we have hundreds of ELL and special needs students who struggle in general ed classes. Imagine for a minute what a class of 32 students feels like for an ELL, special needs child with one teacher or several teachers moving in and out of a classroom? It feels like taking classes in the middle times square in New Years Eve. The scope of the problem is heartbreaking.

I am in District 15 with some of the largest increases in class size since 2006. Since 2006, our K-3 saw an 18.9% increase grades 4-8 17.8%. I remember the daily struggles of my daughters. Once instance burned in my memory: Just last year -- my daughter, telling me in her upset little voice, when I pressed her about why she's so disengaged. She told me "mami, there is so much happening. The teacher spends most of her time trying to discipline kids or running from one thing to the next. We haven't been able to get through anything. This is a waste of time." She also talked about how sad she felt for her teacher. She really struggled. She broke my heart and clearly hit on EXACTLY what we needed to do.

We must allocate the **\$100 million to fund class reduction that will allow us to hire teachers we need. When do council members vote to make this happen?** Our city finds money to build jails, support developers, and for more police. Our budget tells you what we value, tells you what kind of society we are, what we value. Failure to prioritize funding for a reduction in class size is directly telling our children, our families, our teachers and administrators that they are not important. We need to stop repeating old mistakes, ignoring the evidence, and make a full-bodied commitment to the success of NYC children. I am also in full support of the resolution 5915.

Thank you.

Alexa Aviles, 31st Street, , Brooklyn, NY 11232



**TESTIMONY OF EDUCATION LAW CENTER
TO THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
ON OVERSIGHT-CLASS SIZE REDUCTION
FEBRUARY 28, 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to this Committee on the pressing issue of addressing classroom overcrowding in New York City public schools.

My name is Wendy Lecker and I am a senior attorney at Education Law Center (ELC). ELC is the nation's legal defense fund for public education rights and, in 2011, assumed the core mission of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity organization: to advance the right of all school children to a sound basic education as guaranteed by the New York Constitution.

Smaller class size is among the most effective tools for improving education outcomes, especially for at-risk children. New York's highest court recognized the importance of reasonable class sizes in its landmark 2003 Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State (CFE) ruling. The Court of Appeals found that tens of thousands of City school children were consigned to excessively large classes, indicative of a "systemic failure" that deprived New York City schoolchildren of their constitutional right to a "sound basic education.

Seventeen years after that court ruling, New York City school children are still consigned to the same excessively large class sizes that the Court of Appeals found unconstitutional. Data from 2019 shows that over thirty-five thousand (35,000) first through third graders were assigned to classes of 30 or more, an increase of almost 3,000% since 2007. In total, almost 300,000 New York City public school students were in classes of 30 or more as of October 2019.

In 2007, the Legislature enacted the Contract for Excellence Law (C4E) mandating that New York City reduce these extreme class sizes. In 2008, the City committed to a plan to reduce class sizes within five years – or by 2012 – in three grade spans. Under that plan, class size averages in Kindergarten through third

grade were to be lowered to no more than 20 students, to 23 students in grades 4-8, and 25 students in core high school classes. The C4E law requiring a five-year class size reduction plan has been reauthorized by the Legislature every year and remains in full force and effect again this year.

Unfortunately, New York City failed to fulfill this plan by 2012. Even worse, the State Education Commissioner, in a plain misreading of the C4E class size reduction law, issued a decision in a petition ELC filed on behalf of public school parents, Class Size Matters and the Alliance for Quality Education absolving the City of its obligation under the C4E law to reduce class sizes and to keep class sizes low. We have appealed the Commissioner's decision and shortly expect a ruling from the New York Appellate Court.

In addition, the State Legislature has failed to provide the City with the funding and other resources necessary to comply with the class size reduction law. As you know, the City remains underfunded by over \$1 billion in State school aid through the Foundation Aid formula.

The result of these failures is that class size averages in all grade spans in City schools have increased since 2007: 14% in Kindergarten through third grade, 6% in 4th-8th grade, and 2% in high school.

Reducing class size has a lasting impact on a child's academic and life outcomes, with gains that outweigh costs two to one. It is well past time for New York City to renew its commitment to reduce class sizes and give all children, particularly the most vulnerable, the opportunity for a sound basic education as guaranteed by the New York State Constitution.

The City must re-commit to making class size reduction a priority. It must fulfill its obligation under the C4E law and direct resources to reducing class size averages to established targets in all grade spans within five years. To begin, we recommend setting aside \$100 million in next year's budget to reduce class size, as recommended by Class Size Matters. And the City must work with public school advocates to secure from the State the essential financial and other supports needed to finally bring all City schools into constitutional compliance.

Thank you very much for the opportunity provide testimony.

**The New York City Council
Committee on Education
Friday, February 28, 2020 10:00 A.M. City Hall, Committee Room
Oversight – Class Size Reduction**

Good morning my name is Naila Rosario, I parent of a High Schooler at Gaynor McCown High School in District 31 and a Middle Schooler at MS 839 in District 15.

Thank you, Education Chair and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. Today I would like to provide testimony on behalf of NYC KidsPAC, a parent-led political action committee focused on NYC Public Schools.

Both of my children have been in large classes since kindergarten. I am very concerned that my children have not been able to receive the attention and feedback needed from their teachers. This year, my daughter's class has 32 students. Her teacher often cannot respond to students' questions given the size of the class. My daughter is often frustrated by the inability to obtain help from her teachers.

Her school is located in a school district that has grown but schools have not been built at the same pace. According to advocacy groups like Class Size Matter, "Class sizes have increased sharply in all districts since 2008 and are 15-30% larger on average than in the rest of the state." My children and I are experiencing this firsthand in district 15.

After attending elementary and middle school in D15, my son is now in a school with an average number of 21. In District 31 in Staten Island, I can see the difference in the type of attention he now receives from his teachers. His test scores have increased, he has had better grades and overall I find him to be more engaged in school. Its unfortunate that more black and Latino children like him are not in school districts like District 31.

According to Chalkbeat.org, Since Mayor de Blasio took office, achievement levels have been flat or declining, as measured on the NAEP exams, the most reliable national assessments. And the gap in test scores between students of different economic and racial groups has widened.¹

Today I would like to join with Class Size Matter and urge the Mayor and the NYC council to allocate \$100 million to be specifically allocated towards hiring teachers to lower class size, starting first in the early grades and in struggling schools.

¹ <https://chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/04/10/yet-again-new-york-city-shows-no-gains-on-a-national-reading-and-math-exam/>

That amount would pay for the salaries of about 1,000 new teachers, which could reduce class size in as many as 4,000 classrooms – as adding a new teacher at a grade level lowers class size for all the other students in that same grade in the school. These funds would represent less than one percent of the 27 billion dollars that the DOE is spending this year.

My children have spent more than 8 years in classes with excessive student-to-teacher ratio. They have been lucky to have wonderful teachers, but this ratio simply doesn't allow for the one-on-one attention that a classroom requires. We need to solve this problem now, not in five or ten years.

In my daughters school many teachers do not have their own classrooms, and must teach in the library or computer lab, rendering these rooms unusable by the rest of the school. This also makes it impossible for these teachers to use learning tools on which teachers with their own classroom space rely, such as charts and maps and displays of student work. The hallways are spilling over with students between classes, creating an unsafe environment. Classes are at maximum size or beyond, opening the school to potential union grievances.

According to Class Size Matters, In about half the school districts, there is space to lower class size now. In some overcrowded districts, Pre-K classes could be transferred into CBOs, many of which are under-enrolled. Kindergarten classes could be moved to half-empty DOE-operated Pre-K centers, where there is more space to reduce class size.

Overall, there does need to be an expedited and expanded capital plan. Another \$100 million in upfront costs amortized over time would fund more than 21,000 additional seats, given the current 50% state reimbursement for capital expenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, please allocate \$100 million toward lowering class size for my children and many students like them that come home frustrated because they ask their teacher a question.

Good afternoon Council Members,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. I would like to introduce myself, they call me MS D. I'm not a dean of an Ivy League university, I am not from the Department of Education. I am a New York City elementary school teacher with 36 years of experience in the classroom. I've worked in different schools, with different leadership, for different populations, and in all grades 3k through 6th.

What brings me here today is my personal experience in the classroom. I am not going to cite any studies. You will not hear me say research shows. I am going to give you the "real". While I was teaching 4th grade back in the early 90's I had 36 or more students in my class for three years in a row. Honestly, I couldn't even see those children in the back of the room. In those days desks were still in rows. This was in the days before differentiating instruction was the norm. When I first started teaching in NYC only two Reading groups were required. Luckily things have improved since then. Now the UFT contract limits class size to 32 students.

Other things have changed. Teachers evaluate students and form Literacy and Math groups. We must write lesson plans for these small groups in addition to whole-class instruction. They must be assessed before and after lessons, also weekly and monthly. The teacher must meet with each group 2-5 times a week depending on their ability. There are ability groupings and skill groups. This makes for more, pedagogy, paperwork, emotional work, logistics and the need for more space. It is not humanly possible to differentiate for 32 children!

Say the average group size is 5 and you need to see some groups 5 times a week, $5 \times 5 = 25$ that's the optimal class size. Even if you have 6 in a group you can only manage 30 students. Ideally, I would like to see:

Prek - 18
K - 20
1st - 22
2nd - 22
3rd - 24
4th - 25
5th - 26

I don't talk about things I don't know about so middle and high school are not included. Next, a line item for class size reduction must be reinstated whether it's title II or other funding. Finally, I am realistic, I know we are in a time of a shortage of teachers and there are funding issues. Let's at least get the cap to 30 it's at least a start. Anything else is criminal! I challenge all sides to negotiate in good faith and include this in the next contract. It might just help retain teachers.

Thank you

MS Laraine DeAngelis MS ED

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

**TO: Honorable Mark Treyger, Chair : Committee on Education
RE Oversight - Class Size Reduction**

February 24, 2020

I am Mark Alter, a Professor of Educational Psychology at New York University and founding chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning where I served as Chair for 14 years. Besides my publications and my national and international workshops, I've directed funded grants in the field of special education and teacher education. I received a Fulbright Senior Specialist award to Viet Nam and was awarded The NYU Distinguished Teaching award. I am permanently certified as a NYS special education teacher with experience as an assistant teacher and teacher with students with severe and profound disabilities . My PhD is from Yeshiva University in special education and I have an international presence , most recently in Romania, Crete , Brazil & Argentina discussing special education, teacher education and early childhood education.

For decades there has been a push for systemic reforms in education across the country and in New York City to improve the day-to-day experiences and the long-term outcomes for all students. Yet the latest results of the Nation's Report Card paint a grim picture of academic progress in U.S. schools. "Over the past decade, there has been no progress in either mathematics or reading performance, and the lowest-performing students are doing worse," Based on results of the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress Diane Ravitch reports that since 2017, reading performance has dropped significantly across grades 4 and 8, with math performance mixed. While some racial achievement gaps closed—in part because of falling scores among white students—gaps between struggling and high-achieving students continued to widen. Alex Zimmerman reported (Oct 29, 2019) that New York City's performance on the National Assessment of Education Progress showed that student achievement as a whole has hardly budged. This finding certainly calls into question what we consider a successful educational program and system.

Despite different measures of success (e.g, Graduation rates) have students received a sound basic education? Have they received the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be productive citizens in the 21st century? To be gainfully employed? To be active citizens

and engaged community members? Despite the vast amount of money spent and the many educational and administrative "reforms" that have been implemented, education of all students in New York City is still underperforming. The many administrative changes, and school reforms approaches have not changed the landscape sufficiently for many students. Maybe it is time we invest in teaching and learning and go into the classroom. A place to begin is thinking seriously about class size!

The research and literature in support of the positive effects of reducing class size is compelling. Please see Leonie Haimson website (www.classsizematters.org) and power point presentation "Class size in NYC schools – *why it matters & what should be done*" 1/16/2020. The presentation shows :

- 1) Smaller classes lead to better grades and test scores, stronger student engagement, fewer disciplinary referrals, less teacher attrition and higher graduation rates, especially for students who need help the most.
- 2) Class size reduction is one of only a handful of reforms shown through rigorous research to narrow the achievement gap between economic and racial groups.
- 3) Economists estimate that smaller classes yields economic benefits twice the costs; the benefits are especially large for low-income students and children of color.
- 4) Smaller classes in NYC schools would likely lead to substantial cost savings in terms of fewer special education referrals, less teacher training costs, less grade retention and higher four-year graduation rates as well.
- 5) In a survey, 99% NYC teachers responded that class size reduction would be an effective or very effective reform to improve NYC schools – more than any other reform cited.
- 6) Smaller classes is also the highest or second highest priority of parents in the DOE surveys every year when asked what changes they would most like to see in their children's schools.
- 7) The total number of students in classes of 30 or more citywide has also substantially increased since 2007.
- 8) This fall there were more than 330,000 NYC public school students in classes of 30 or more.

In addition, research I conducted with my colleague Jay Gottlieb about the effects of increasing class size for the special education Resource Room clearly demonstrated (1) a substantial decrease in the reading achievement scores of resource room students, especially at the sixth grade level. Mathematics scores also declined, but not significantly; (2) Resource room teachers reported that the increase in instructional group size diminished their ability to help students. Direct observations of resource room instruction revealed that very little time was spent on individual instruction. Finally, (3)

Observation also indicated that about one-fourth of instructional time was spent escorting students to and from their classrooms, further decreasing instructional time. These findings led us to recommend that no more than five students should receive resource room instruction at one time (Special Education Class Sizes Are Linked to a Drop in Scores ..

<https://www.nytimes.com> › 1997/09/16 › nyregion › special-education-class-)

Let me end with a practical reason why class size matters. If a middle school teacher or high school teacher has a class register of 30 students and meets five classes a day that's 150 students per day. If the teacher gives a writing assignment and the students write three pages then the teacher has 450 pages to read for content, grammar and feedback. If the teacher gives the 150 students a home work assignment, 150 responses will need to be forthcoming. Yet, it's impossible for a teacher to have the time to read and react to each student in a reasonable amount of time. Keeping in mind that many students have an IEP (in NYC one in five) requiring feedback, asking teachers to individualize, differentiate, conduct pre referral interventions, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Response to Intervention (RTI) is impossible to do with fidelity and meet the unique needs of all students; that is unless there is a significant reduction in class size.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Alter

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TESTIMONY submitted by KEMALA KARMEN on 2/28/2020
For CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING ON CLASS SIZE

My children attended a wonderful Brooklyn elementary school. It used a “progressive,” inquiry-based approach to education, with plenty of hands-on projects and lots of opportunities for experiential learning. The only thing that *wasn't* great about the school was the class size. Every single class was at the contractual limit. For the most part, my children’s teachers were smart, creative, and nurturing, but with classes that large it’s not surprising that they sometimes lost their cool.

It’s difficult to imagine how enormous class size could be of benefit to any school, but it’s definitely onerous for schools that use an experiential learning model where students take frequent field trips. I remember chaperoning a 3rd grade trip where we had to walk a few blocks from the subway to our destination. At every intersection we got honked at because there were so many children and accompanying grownups (teachers, paras, chaperoning parents) that we couldn’t get across the street before the light changed. To be frank, it didn’t feel completely safe--although please don’t conclude that the solution to that precarity is to limit trips. Trips are great, especially in a city like ours, with so many natural and cultural riches. But they would be even better if the number of students was small enough that they could all cross the street uneventfully.

I wasn’t the only one in our family cognizant and concerned about class size; my children were as well. Although they enjoy a snow day as much as the next kid, they didn’t grumble that much when I sent them to school on those borderline days where a snow day wasn’t called. Why? Because on those days, some parents kept their kids home anyway, making the classrooms less crowded than usual. On these occasions my girls remarked on how much more pleasant the day was; the teachers seemed less stressed, there was less squabbling among the kids, and they felt like they got more attention from the teacher.

When it came time for my older daughter to apply to middle school, the uncharacteristically small class size at one school earned it a lot of check marks on the “pro and con list” we drew up to help us rank schools on the application. She was eventually matched to that school, which her younger sister now attends. I think one of the reasons that the transition to middle school from elementary was unremarkable for my children was due precisely to its small class size. It facilitated their getting to know the other new 6th graders and meant the teachers and even the principal got to know them well early on.

But their school’s ability to preserve small class size has come at a price--in order to limit class size the administration has to divert *nearly all available resources* to that endeavor. That means, among other things, that there isn’t enough money to hire sufficient office staff. So don’t expect anyone to pick up the phone if you call. They save some money by making the school camping trip shorter by a day than the elementary school’s camping trip. And don’t get me started on the dire state of the school’s physical plant. You’d think that a school shouldn’t have to choose between a decent

student-teacher ratio and a ceiling intact enough not to shower plaster on the head of some unsuspecting kid.

I know that keeping classes small takes money, and that the state isn't giving NYC's public schools what they need and are legally owed. We need to keep fighting the state for that money. But that's not the only reason we don't have smaller classes. It's simply not a priority for the NYCDOE--and that needs to change. When this committee met in September, DOE's Linda Chen announced that students would have to take an additional standardized assessment, later revealed to be the computer-based MAP. She also spoke about a new "protocol," Edustat, modeled on COMPSTAT. Who knows if these things will work to drive student achievement? But we do know, from research, that lowering class size will. So, let's invest in the proven reform of class size reduction; we can scrap the MAP and Edustat.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Paola Cruz, Junior, Columbia University
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

My name is Paola Cruz, and I am a Junior at Columbia University's School of General Studies, studying Comparative Literature. I want to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to submit testimony.

I'm a first-generation low-income student and an immigrant. That said, my family was not able to help me fully navigate the system in New York. But I knew that moving here was not going to be an easy feat, so I sought the services and programs that enabled me to settle and prepare for college. Having earned and learned all the resources that I have, I came to realize how my peers in college struggle every day because they don't have access to the same resources that I have.

I was a transfer student from LaGuardia Community College. My idea of a fun American experience in college is far from what I witnessed in LaGuardia. There were homeless students, undocumented students who didn't have access to resources, and students who worked three different jobs while also being a parent. I wasn't the only one who was striving for success. While in LaGuardia, I was a full-time student taking 15-21 credits a semester, all while working 45 hours a week. But compared to my peers, I was in a privileged position. I was able to graduate with flying colors and debt-free, and that is because CUNY ASAP exists. CUNY ASAP changes the lives of the students, allowing us to pursue our dreams without any financial burden holding us and slowing us down. I learned that ASAP is only available to community colleges and not through the four-year colleges of New York. Research shows that the ASAP graduation rate is more than three times the national three-year graduation rate of 16% for urban community colleges. It would be a tremendous help for students, either coming as first-years or transferring to a four-year college, to have the same kind of support that ASAP offers. Witnessing the problems students face in a two-year institution still extends to a four-year one.

The problems that students face in a two-year institution also happen to a four-year college. One would think that a private college offers many great deal of opportunities for students, but few know that low-income students suffer the most in these institutions. The main problem that I see on my campus is the lack of financial aid — not only on tuition, but also in support of other non-tuition costs such as food, housing, and transportation for low-income students. I never had to experience any of these problems while attending LaGuardia because of the support that sustained me through ASAP, thus allowing me to graduate on-time. I can only imagine how it must be for many students across CUNY schools and many other schools, for that matter.

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

I encourage the New York City Council to make CUNY ASAP accessible for all senior colleges of New York. I also challenge the state officials to ensure that low-income students receive more financial aid in private institutions. And I demand legislators to push through the policies that benefit the students who are in most need, thus lifting not only the marginalized and under-represented groups but also boosting the economic growth of our community.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Tanisha Williams, Senior, Hunter College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

Good morning. My name is Tanisha Williams and I am a senior at Hunter College majoring in Film. I am very thankful that the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education gave me the opportunity to submit testimony to the Council.

As a fifth year student, I realize that my college needs to prioritize students over administration. In fact, CUNY institutions are falling apart, with little to no funding dedicated to improving infrastructure while Hunter's President, Jennifer Raab, earns nearly half a million dollars in salary. Escalators are often not working and last year a ceiling light almost fell on me in the North Building. It was a terrifying experience and I would never wish the fear I felt on anyone. I commend the staff for trying their best to contain the problems and allowing students to send work orders to shed light on these issues.

We need a form of checks and balances in our school to ensure that the money that is allocated is used to benefit the students who pay to go here more than the extremely well paid higher ups. I am asking our City and State leaders to make the budgets for each CUNY school and their budget allocations accessible to students. In addition, state legislation such as the CUNY New Deal bill can help address these issues, and I urge our City electeds to look into this legislation. Proposals like the CUNY New Deal would help both students and staff: Hunter staff are quite overwhelmed and larger classes make it harder for students to learn. If possible, there also needs to be more hybrid or online courses with CUNYs that students could take so students could work on their degree and professors can have smaller classes and teach more. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by James Hill, Third-year Student, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

Greetings! My name is James Hill, the Third. I am a first year, first-generation student at CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College, and I am a Liberal Arts major. I would like to first express my warmest appreciation to the NYC Council and the Higher Education Committee Chair Inez Barron for the opportunity to submit testimony and for letting our voices be heard.

Stepping into BMCC, I experienced a gamut of emotions: happiness, fear, anxiety, optimism, pessimism, uncertainty, but most of all, a resounding sense of personhood or manhood as some might say. I saw going to college as my opportunity to “get my piece of the pie.” It did not take long for me to realize that when I was forewarned that “college would be hard,” I might have been in for more than I bargained for. But what has been even more jarring is the disparity in opportunity and resources for individuals like myself. It has become increasingly harder to compete, not because I’m not capable, but because two months into the semester, I still do not have the finances to buy all of the materials needed for classes to be successful. I am a part of CUNY Black Male Initiative (BMI), and Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA) at BMCC. Mr. Holmes, the BMI Director has done a great job with events, mentoring/networking opportunities, and has helped me to find a sense of belonging on campus. With all that said though, I still had trouble paying for my MetroCards, living expenses, and access to technology.

As a former representative in the Student Government Association, I know that there are a large number of students like me that don’t have the money to afford a laptop to complete work. Lack of funding has left us with old technology and absurd wait times to use computers at the library because a number of them are “out of service” at any given time. I am appealing to you to invest in money into BMCC funding for technology and programs like CUNY BMI so that we students can do our part and get the education we deserve. Our plan would be to purchase a small quantity of laptops, and create borrowing limits/agreements to mirror those similar to Baruch College’s. We would also like to look into the previous partnership CUNY had with Apple to reactivate that relationship. And since CUNY BMI has already built a targeted relationship with the underserved and underrepresented students, I think that helping this program get more funding will help reach the students like myself who need this the most. All of these requests are with the goal of student retention and graduation.

We don’t set out to fail, but we also aren’t set up to succeed. And it leaves me wondering, what do I do when showing up on time is not enough? When getting a 3.675 GPA, juggling 15 credits,

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

three part time jobs and balancing various family issues is not enough? When overextending myself in extracurricular activities just so I can get a MetroCard so I don't have to hop the turnstiles or face the embarrassment of asking someone to swipe you in, what do I do? What should I do when enough is not enough?



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Lyric Young, Senior, City College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

My name is Lyric Young. I am a senior at City College studying Psychology with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies. I'd like to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My journey through the education system in New York City was not traditional like most students. I didn't apply for high schools or take the Regents Exam. I had to drop out of high school and move my entire life to New York to start over again. Starting over didn't mean going back to high school and being a normal student. Starting over meant taking the TASC and getting my GED in order to catch up with the academic level I was supposed to be on. I was very fortunate to find the Pathways to Graduation program where I was able to prepare and take the TASC within a summer, which ultimately led to me starting my college career a semester before the rest of my former colleagues. As a first-generation student, I would never have dreamed of these kinds of opportunities being available to me. With full credit to the Pathways to Graduation program, Goddard Success program and the ASAP program, at Borough of Manhattan Community College the beginning of my college career was incredibly successful. I was able to worry about my academics and my personal life problems without thinking about how I was going to pay for my tuition, or how to get to class. I was able to attend my classes, and have access to the resources that I needed for class and the only requirements were to show up and keep my GPA over 2.0.

Transitioning from a 2-year to 4-year college program was completely different from the success story from above. After the application and acceptance process, there were no advisors and no guidance. I and other students in the same place as me were alone on their next steps in their college career. Tasks that once felt simple became some of the hardest problems. Applying for financial aid went from the submission of forms to being selected for verification every single semester despite it being "random selection." Suddenly, I was trying to explain to my recently laid-off immigrant single father of three how financial aid works in America when I barely understood how it worked and why all of these forms were necessary for the future of my education. It all felt incredibly invasive and like I was at fault for needing additional support to continue higher education while I tried to help support my family during this financial struggle. I was not prepared for how difficult everything would suddenly be. I don't think anyone would be, really. It drops on you like the air in humid weather: sudden, unexpected, and heavy like a stack of bricks. I had charges for things that I couldn't even comprehend. Fees for technology that doesn't even work, and for buildings that are run down and ridden with asbestos. It isn't fair or

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

right to expect students to accept these circumstances and sit idly.

Students in four-year universities need the support that students in two-year universities need. As a city that prides itself on public resources and the ability to help provide for its residents, why aren't there more resources for students in the city? Programs such as CUNY ASAP for community colleges need to be expanded to four-year universities to ensure success in higher education and promote students to get a degree. By expanding these programs and creating a clear-cut explanation on the transfer and financial aid process will relieve the stress off students and create a safe place to learn and succeed hopefully resulting in graduation rates going up. Students don't drop out because they aren't motivated, but rather they drop out because they simply can't afford to continue with their higher education for whatever reason. As much as they want to get a degree it simply isn't feasible for them due to the lack of resources and assistance granted to them by the city.

I am very aware of the ACE program taking place in two out of several CUNY four year universities, but I am asking the City to invest more in the ASAP and ACE programs in order to give lower-income students more opportunities to succeed in higher education beyond community college. Especially since these programs have already proven successful to students in CUNY institutions, expanding such programs will only create a successful future for the residents of New York City. As of 2018-2019, the city is providing 25,000 out of about 200,000 students support through the ASAP and ACE program. Through the expansion of ACE and ASAP, it is possible to provide even more students with the resources that they need to continue and finish their higher education and to move into the working world without the stress and fear of how their socioeconomic status will hold them back.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Sierra Atkins, Sophomore, New York City College of Technology
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

My name is Sierra Atkins and I am a sophomore at New York City College of Technology. I would first like to thank the NYC Council and Higher Education Committee Chair Inez Barron for this opportunity to share with you all. The problem that I would like to address that I see on my campus, and across many CUNY campuses, is student homelessness and its impact on student success.

As a young adult supporting myself and having to navigate the CUNY system on my own, I can truly say that it has not been a pleasurable experience. Since I first started college I've worked two jobs and still attended school all while trying to maintain my grades. I have always been a great student, but many of my failures and challenges have risen exponentially due to the costs beyond tuition, such as high rent prices in New York City. Furthermore, each year, my costs increase. I also see a lack of support from the government: I am not eligible for many public benefits because of the age bracket I am in and the fact that I am considered "able bodied." Many of my colleagues and friends of all different races and creeds have also experienced hardship receiving financial aid and maintaining it while working part time, or the providing documentation. I myself have had an issue with proving that I was a self-supporting individual that did not have the support of family. Though I am supporting myself, the financial aid system sees me as someone who would need to base my college experience on my parents' income because I am under the age of 23.

Coming from a background of someone that has had a traumatic childhood experience and strained relationships with family, I had to find a way through college on the little money I had to go. I found a program in the city that would help legally represent me and show that I was indeed taking part in supportive services as an independent person. The resubmission process to a school and the pressure of trying to maintain housing in the city is ridiculously hard. Safe housing/shelters for a young woman my age is very hard to come by because of the influx of people in need, and had I not had the small support of case managers (some of whom have tried to have me exploited), I wouldn't even have made it into my school this far. The resources to food assistance is so limited and almost unheard of that it barely lifts the burden off anyone. There is no supportive housing to help the many CUNY students who commute to college, and access to MetroCards (for emergencies) are limited as well. I had so many instances where I needed to go to the school counseling office and explain personal issues such as these and the physical and emotional toll it was taking on me to finish the semester, it was mostly a hit or miss with actual support or just encouragement just now to drop out of class. Needless to say, I was unable to

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

finish, along with my friends that became part time students because they could not afford to be in school full time, and pay tuition while working.

CUNY must address the real challenges students face, including homelessness, especially as the city has limited public benefits for able-bodied individuals between the ages of 18-49 years old. I would like to see dedicated, supportive housing programs for college students. The requirements would be that the student would be attending classes regularly, maintaining the grade average of a C, attending offered tutoring services that is reasonably within their schedule, workforce and resume workshops and time in between classes to help get employment/ paid internships when they are approaching graduation. If college was able to help tackle these issues it would help decrease the homeless population. In addition, we need more information on students and their basic needs at CUNY. Updated numbers on how many CUNY students experience issues like I've experienced can offer students a more effective approach of addressing their needs while also helping the schools maintain student enrollment numbers and boosting graduation rates.

It's common knowledge now that the government is leaving a grey area to the generation of Millennials who are trying to get degrees but are also trying as best as they can with what they can to make money and take care of themselves. I am calling on the leaders in both City Council and their colleagues in Albany to seriously shoulder a way for Millennials that would help with making a positive change, not just for students but for communities of people that will leave legacies of generations of poverty if we do not fix this problem. Its true that the government can't shoulder the weight of all these people, so as a solution we, young people want to learn and reach out to every part of our system through advocacy to all take up just a bit of the burden and make our systems work better. We are better than the labels that society gives us. Just give us the chance to show it. You have a whole new generation of innovative people being suppressed and world changing ideas being unrealized or unreachable just because we can't have access to knowledge that needs to be available to everyone. As the saying goes, "Teamwork makes the dream work", and I hope and truly believe we can make this work.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Neha Syeda, Sophomore, Brooklyn College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

Good Morning, my name is Neha Syeda, and I'm a sophomore at Brooklyn College studying Communications and Political Science. I want to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing.

Being a CUNY student, I have first-hand experience of what it's like to be part of an institution that is falling apart while keeping the facade of its empowering legacy. In today's economy where having a college education has become a necessity because a student with a college degree earns \$17,500 more than a counterpart without a college degree, many CUNY students cannot afford to pay a high tuition to attend public universities. Recently, CUNY has increased tuition for four-year students, saying that these hikes will help CUNY provide exceptional services to its students. Yet, as tuition goes up, the quality of services accessible to students seems to go down. I am currently in my sophomore year and I don't have a lot of time before I have to declare my major. I want to seek advising in order to make an informed decision of what major would be most suitable for my goals and my financial aid package, but that is almost impossible. In order for me to get an appointment to have a discussion with an advisor, I have to wait for an absurd amount of time. The workload of these advisors does not allow them to provide extensive advisement to everyone. I'm a first-generation CUNY college student and I'm not able to receive help from my family. My only hope is to get help from the resources provided by the college but because of the shortage of staff members, I'm not able to receive help from college. Despite paying increasing tuition, I am still deprived of the services that the tuition should cover. This shortage of staff is not only an issue in advising, but it also stretches over to the teaching faculty on campus. Colleges often tend to appoint adjunct professors rather than employing full-time faculty to save costs. Students do not benefit from this situation. Whether seeking help with classes, meeting with professors outside of the classroom, or seeking advisement, the students are usually at a loss. With their low-paying jobs, the adjunct professors are not able to offer to students the support that a full-time faculty is able to provide.

Another major issue that the CUNY students encounter is the lack of classes being offered. I have looked at different majors, and one of the most important aspects for me to consider before committing to a department is the availability of classes. More often than not the college cuts back on the classes being offered or the times at which these classes are offered. In order for me to graduate on time and maintain my financial aid, which I fully intend on doing, I cannot afford to take a major that I enjoy without risking my graduation delay. A lot of my peers are not able to take classes that they need in order to graduate and this leads to their delayed graduation and

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

increased cost of college. I myself want to double major because I want to study the subjects that I enjoy, but that seems like an impossible task. I cannot pursue a double major without the risk of delaying my graduation because the classes that I will need might end up being cut out because of the shortage of funding.

I understand that the City Council fully intends to assist students to pursue their careers and therefore fund CUNY schools to their capacity but the issues that CUNY schools and its students are facing can be tracked to a state-level cause. The TAP GAP plays a vital role in the loss of funding because even when the schools raise their tuition every school year, the rise in TAP GAP restricts them from moving forward. The schools are caught up with the pressure to keep the lights on for their schools that they cannot afford to better their services. The responsibility that the state should be accountable for are now in the hands of the administrators. I urge the members of the City Council and especially the Committee on Higher Education to voice out their support and call on our leaders in Albany to end the TAP GAP so that the schools have the opportunity to better serve their students.

Thank you so much for your time.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Zaret Cortorreal, Junior at Lehman College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

My name is Zaret Cortorreal, I am a junior at Lehman College pursuing double major in Accounting and Computer Information Systems. I want to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My experience as a transfer student to Lehman College was not as flexible as it was when I first started at Borough of Manhattan Community College. I wanted to graduate early, and planned on taking summer classes to do so. But by the time I applied for my senior college and got a response from my new advisors, it was too late to take these summer classes. The lack of advising for transfer students is a big problem. Some of my classmates do not know what majors they should choose while at community college that will transfer successfully at their senior college. This makes it harder to graduate on time.

The challenge is CUNY knows what works for students. Guttman College, for instance, is one of CUNY's community colleges and has a 72 percent two-year graduation rate. Compared that with BMCC, which has a 25 percent graduation rate. Part of that success is that students at Guttman Community College have strong advising support, including advising for first-year students and transfer students. Each of these advisors makes sure that the student understands what they want to study and what that major can transfer to a four-year college. Strong advising support means also better tracking of students and their progress towards graduation. Advisors can weigh in early if summer or winter classes could help students graduate on time or early.

Part of the solution CUNY is to increase advising for community college students. Advisors can provide not only general advice, but can help student with the process of transferring to a four-year college and choosing a major that will help them graduate on time or early.



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Romy O. Robielos II,
Junior at New York City College of Technology, CUNY
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

Good Afternoon! My name is Romy Robielos II, and I am a Junior student at New York City College of Technology – CUNY studying Biomedical Informatics. I want to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to testify at today's meeting.

Food Insecurity is a major dilemma not just facing young New Yorkers nowadays but also the entire nation. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, “food insecurity” is defined as the disruption of normal eating patterns due to lack of money or other resources for food. According to recent studies, one in eight New Yorkers are unable to afford an adequate amount of food which translates to more than one million city residents who are “food insecure”. The numbers are even staggering for college students as 45% of American college students are struggling with having to worry about what to eat daily – a number higher than that of the general population. CUNY Food Insecurity Data also reported about 60,000 CUNY undergraduate students or 25% experience food insecurity. As a full-time student from New York City who must worry about high costs of tuition and fees, textbooks, housing and daily transportation, quality food is often the one left on the line to be sacrificed so my other obligations will be met. Personally, I lost count how many times I had to be concerned on what to eat on a meal-to-meal basis so I could still have enough money left to purchase food for that day, for the week, and for the month. As I have experienced this myself, I know a lot of students in and out my campus are also struggling with the same problems of “food insecurity” such as me.

While there are existing food pantries and food vouchers available in some colleges for selected number of students around CUNY and SUNY system, there are still a lot of work to be done to limit this “food insecurity” crisis affecting majorly our student population. It will take everyone's voice working together – individual students, workers, school administration, families, local and state officials and lawmakers to make a change in this area. For this reason, I am asking the City to expand and continuously invest on programs specifically targeted to address the food insecurity crisis for young New Yorkers. I am also calling our leaders in Albany to prioritize issues on food insecurity for it creates a lasting impact on our young generation's mental, emotional, social and physical well-being necessary for a formidable future society we all aspire. As from the moving words of Waleek Boone, a student life specialist at Medgar Evers College: *“We want the student to not only think right, we want them to eat right... we want to try to give them the food that's going to have them focus in school that's going to sustain them.”* Thank you so much!



**New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Preliminary Budget Hearing
Submitted by Yasmin Seweid, Senior at Baruch College
Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

Good morning. My name is Yasmin Seweid, and I am a senior at Baruch College studying Sociology. I want to thank the New York City Council and the Committee on Higher Education for the opportunity to submit testimony.

As a volunteer at the Office of Health and Wellness, I have had the opportunity to speak to Baruch students regarding their physical, mental and emotional health. Through various conversations, my peers and I have discussed the ineffectiveness of the services provided by the Counseling Center. After my first semester at Baruch College, I was forced to take a semester off to deal with school pressures and personal traumas. Upon returning to Baruch, I utilized the Counseling Center to combat my mental health problems. However, after three semesters of seeing a psychologist, I noticed no change and decided to stop going. Had there been proper resources to help me work through my problems, I would have been able to continue my education and stay on track to graduate on time. Although I am privileged in having health insurance through my parents and was able to find an external psychologist, many students do not have that privilege and continue to battle their mental health on their own. Baruch College's Counseling Center employs ten counselors, two of whom are student psychological counselors. With over 15,000 undergraduate students, the Counseling Center is understaffed and under-resourced, unable to properly serve them. Furthermore, some students in my university's diverse student body have varying experiences that necessitate the presence of counselors equipped with handling different mental illnesses. Because of the lack of sufficient funding, there is a deficit of properly trained counselors serving the students. Furthermore, the resources that are available to students are not well advertised and unknown to many. Baruch College students require efficient and productive counseling services in order to allow for a fruitful education.

Baruch College has continued to impose \$200 annual tuition hikes, with \$120 intended for health and wellness services. With over \$3 million collected from students, we are expecting gross improvements to the health and wellness department, but nothing has yet to be done. On behalf of the Baruch student body, I call on our leaders in City Council to ensure the allocation of more funds for the Counseling Center, to ensure that students are provided with the services that they are paying for. Through more funding, Baruch may be able to hire more well-trained counselors, advertise their services to a broad audience and implement necessary programs for the students' overall health and wellness. We are in desperate need of personnel who care about providing services to ensure an equitable and productive educational journey.

YOUNG INVINCIBLES

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I hope this will encourage New York City to assist in making general education better.

Honorable Council Members,

Thank you for giving parents an opportunity to express our frustrations and deep concerns regarding overcrowded classrooms. My name is Paullette Healy and I am a parent in District 20 and District 75 and am also a member of the CCSE. I have compiled testimony from various teachers, former administrators, parents and educators regarding the struggles they are experiencing with their children and students when faced with the constant increasing numbers filling the classrooms. Its been 17 years since the state Court of Appeals has deemed class sizes are too large in NYC schools, yet more than 325,000 students across are city struggle to learn in schools where class sizes are 30 students or more. Students with learning disabilities struggle to have their IEPs supported, are more prone to outbursts and behavior issues or are held back without the attention necessary to help them succeed in school. Academic intervention is being held in noisy hallways, OT/PT are being done in a supply closets and children with undiagnosed learning obstacles are slipping through the cracks.

Teachers have said, “ I’m beyond frustrated having to give a test I know my students will fail because I wasn’t given a proper pacing schedule to teach so many kids in one classroom.”

“My ICT class is bulging at the seams”

“I’m one person trying to teach 32 kindergarten students including 10 kids with special needs, behavior problems up the wazoo!”

“Kids coming into these overcrowded environments are leaving with heightened sensory sensitivities, attention challenges and increased anxiety that they didn’t have in the beginning of the year.”

“With so many kids, I know I’m missing something and that breaks my heart.”

Research has shown via Project STAR students earn better grades, better test scores, exhibited improved non-cognitive skills and were less likely to have disciplinary problems when placed in smaller classrooms. They were also more likely to graduate on time and head to college. It also allows the students to receive more feedback from teachers which can feel like their teachers care more about them. This personal human connection inspires them to learn.

Our School Chancellor has said in City Hall hearings and parent Town Halls that he will wait until the state provides more Foundation Aid funding and then task his principals to do what they want with the funding. We think the students of NY have had to wait too long as it is! We urge City Council and our mayor to please allocate \$100 million in next year’s budget specifically towards reducing class size in our struggling schools.

In closing, I want to share this statistic...the Literacy Project Foundation has found that across the U.S. 85% of juveniles incarcerated are functionally illiterate and 75% of our nation’s inmates have difficulties in basic literacy skills. Prisons actually base some of their future plannings on 3rd and 4th grade literacy rates. What does it say about us as a society when we rather use the failings of our schools to forecast our prison population?

Thank you for your time.

Sarah Tyson, UFT Chapter Leader

A prime example of the deterioration of the DOE adult education program is Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center. Once a paragon of adult education programs, visited by national and international adult education leaders for its wholistic services, MMALC is now a shell of itself. During the tenure of Superintendent Rose Marie Mills, its exemplary LPN program was abolished on the grounds it was not generating money, denying adults entryway into a livable wage career and denying the city qualified nurses. Additionally, thousands of taxpayers' dollars were spent on renovating and installing new equipment for air conditioning and refrigeration class. The classroom has never been used as intended, repeating the same error. Moreover, the majority of the day classes have been changed from three hour classes to six hours, similar to K-12. The student population has plummeted from over 4,000 to under 2000, about 1800 in about a year. The excuse given is that gentrification is taking place. The majority of the student population comes from Harlem, East Harlem and the Bronx. The question is have these areas been gentrified to the point that the student population would fall so quickly, or is it that the elementary and intermediate school principal and assistant principals hired by Superintendent Mills do not have the skill set, experience or know how to run an adult education programs? When the focus is on bulletin boards, journal writing, door decorating and karaoke sessions and K-12 class schedules, it is no wonder NYC adult education program is dying.,

Sent from my iPhone

<ssarahluv@aol.com>

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SHINO TANIKAWA

Address: 118 SULLIVAN ST

I represent: MYSELF

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Name: Eise McCabe Thompson

Address: _____

I represent: Mission Society

Address: 646 Malcolm X Blvd

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Name: Joshua Aronson

Address: 5 wisteria lane westport ct

I represent: New York University

Address: 726 Broadway NYC

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Name: LORI PODYESKER

Address: 139 WASHINGTON AVE. BK, NY 11205

I represent: INCLUDEM/C

Address: 116 E. 16th ST. NY, NY 10003

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Name: Karin Goldmark, Deputy Chancellor

Address: DIVISION of School Planning and Development

I represent: Administration, DOE

Address: _____

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Name: Nadden August-Laventure

Address: St. Luke's School

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Peter Valentine (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Sch. Luke's school

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Eden's Absalom (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: St. Luke's School

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Jacmin del Valle (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 630W 173RD Street #21 NY 10032

I represent: PS 178 CEC 6

Address: _____

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Senator Robert Jackson

Address: _____

I represent: State Senate

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Johanna Garcia

Address: _____

I represent: State Senate & Plaintiff

Address: NY Senate

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in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Hammond

Address: 131-33 22nd Street, Laurelton, NY 11413

I represent: CECD 29

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: 28 Feb 2020

Name: Kristal Aliyas (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 12 Monroe St, HL9, 10002

I represent: self

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Karin Gold (PLEASE PRINT)
Dorhaine Grillo, President and CEO

Address: of SCA

I represent: Administration, SCA

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Emily Hellstrom (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 66 Crosby St #6E

I represent: CECD 2

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathleen Cashin

Address: 472 83rd St, Bklyn, NY

I represent: myself

Address: _____

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Name: Michael Sill

Address: 52 Broadway NY, NY 10001

I represent: UFT

Address: 52 Broadway

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Date: Feb 28, 2020

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Name: Jessica Siegel

Address: 492 Marlborough Rd Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Brooklyn College

Address: 2900 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn NY

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Date: 2/28/20

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Name: Karen Sprowal

Address: 631 Edgecombe Ave #2B

I represent: NYC Kids PAC / Parent

Address: _____

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Name: Daniel Katz

Address: 210 W. 75th St. 2B 10024

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Alexa Aviles

Address: 215 31st St #N10

I represent: Parents

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

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Name: Curtis Young

Address: 605 W. 156th St Apt 7

I represent: Artistic Noise

Address: 2185 8th Avenue 10027

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in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2020

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Name: Rosalie Friend

Address: 440 Fifth Street, Brooklyn, N.Y 11215

I represent: Uniting to Save Our Schools

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Miriam Aristy-Tarar

Address: 603 W 148 St # 1d NYC 10031

I represent: CB9 / D6

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: 2/29/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Taneshia Grant

Address: 448 W 103 St

I represent: AQE, CEJ, ~~CEJ~~

Address: ~~448~~ 8th boardway

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: BROOKE PARKER

Address: 336 PARKE AVE BROOKLYN

I represent: CLASS SIZE MATTERS

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Evie Hantzopoulos

Address: 32-39 33rd St Astoria NY 11106

I represent: Global Kids, AA + Design PTA

Address: 137 E 25th St, NY NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diana E. Cruz

Address: 55 Exchange Place, 5th floor NY 10005

I represent: Hispanic Federation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tiesha Groover

Address: 168 Sumpter St. Apt 1

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caroline Wechselbaum

Address: 322 8th Ave, 1700

I represent: New York State Senator Brad Hoylman

Address: SAME

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EILEEN BENDON

Address: 25-09 88th St. EDS ELMHURST

I represent: Schools, education

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NUAUA O'Doherty - NARANJO

Address: 35-18 90th St.

I represent: CEC 30 - Queens

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DR. DARIUSZ ZALUSZAK

Address: _____

I represent: MEMBER OF NYC DOE

Address: CITYWIDE COUNCIL ON ELL

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. class size Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/29/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gloria Brandman

Address: 519 5th St

I represent: _____

Address: 5

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kim West

Address: 110-17 179th St. Qns, NY 11433

I represent: CDEC-299

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorraine Forbes, Teens Take Charge

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexander Rodriguez, Teens Take Charge

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tiffani Torres, Teens Take Charge

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther Brunner

Address: 1404 Prospect Place, Apt. 2

Brooklyn, NY 11213

I represent: Self / mother

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition
Reduce Class Sizes Date: *Feb. 28, 2020*

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Kathy Park Price*

Address: *202 8th St 6A*

I represent: *Citizen Squivel*

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition
oversight Date: *2/28/20*

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Sarah Morgridge*

Address: *17 Chittenden Ave*

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition
Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: *Randi Levine*

Address: _____

I represent: *Advocates for Children of New York*

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2-28-2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Faigueline Shannon

Address: 2110 Frederick Douglass Blv. #2B

I represent: NY NY 10026

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maria Rita Hdz

Address: 32-15 95 St 1 F.

I represent: 145

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Westraub

Address: 0469 12th St #2 11215

I represent: PS 107

Address: 1301 8th Ave Brooklyn

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonie Haimson

Address: _____

I represent: Class Size Matters

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cynthia Wachtell

Address: 215 W. 92nd NYC

I represent: Class Size Matters / Diane Ravitch

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VERNON BAYARD

Address: 80 W. 119th St - 8C

I represent: myself

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Norman Scott

Address: 518 Boro 13th St

I represent: Education Notes

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms